John Wm. Roy Crawford

THE ALDINE EDITION OF THE BRITISH POETS

THE POEMS OF JAMES THOMSON

IN TWO VOLUMES

H.Robinson sc.

James Thomson.

THE

POETICAL WORKS OF JAMES THOMSON

VOLUME I

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MEMOIR OF THOMSON.

"Tutored by thee, sweet Poetry exalts
Her voice to ages; and informs the page
With music, image, sentiment, and thoughts,
Never to die!"

The biography of a man whose life was passed in his study, and who is known to the world by his writings alone, can present few facts to render it popular, unless it was chequered by events that excite interest, or marked by traits which lessen esteem. If a Poet has been vicious, the account of the misfortunes which vice never fails to bring, and of its effects on himself, is read with attention; but the career of him who was uniformly virtuous, who experienced no remarkable vicissitudes of fortune, and who was only eminent from the genius which his writings display, must yield in variety of incident to that of a pirate or courtesan.

There is nevertheless much that will gratify a reader whose taste is not so vitiated as to require the excitement of romance, in tracing the progress

of a distinguished literary person; and he who is not desirous of knowing the history of a writer whose name is associated with his earliest recollections must be void of every spark of curiosity. A favourite author possesses claims upon our regard similar to those of friendship; and the tale, which would be dull and tiresome if it concerned any other person, is read, or listened to, with the liveliest pleasure.

Thomson's life must be indebted for whatever gratification it may afford to the sympathy of his admirers, since it is destitute of all other attractions. Little has been preserved concerning him, perhaps because very little was deserving of being recorded; and these notices are so scattered that it has required some labour to form the present memoir. He did less for his own history than almost any other poet of the time, as his works contain few egotisms, and his great dislike to correspondence prevented the existence of those familiar letters which form the most delightful materials for biography.

The task of preparing this memoir has, however, been a grateful one. A writer cannot be indifferent to the pleasure of rendering justice to merit which has been traduced, and of placing an amiable and unblemished character in its true light. Mankind are too apt to form their judgment on the opinions of superior understandings, without reflecting that none are exempt from

caprice even if they be so from errors; and though the statements of an author may be generally just, cases occur in which he is prejudiced or misinformed. It is scarcely necessary to say, that the Life of Thomson by Dr. Johnson is alluded to; and few need be told that this is not the first time his account of the Poet has been charged with injustice. The inquiries necessary for this article have tended to confirm the suspicion that the colossus of literature was influenced by some extraordinary bias against the author of "The Seasons," for not a single notice of him, reflecting upon his character, has been found which is not traceable to Johnson. His Life is sneering and satirical, and he rarely admits Thomson to have possessed a merit without accompanying it by an ungenerous remark. The cause of this conduct must be sought in vain; but the temper of Johnson and his violent political feelings are sufficiently notorious to render the patriotic sentiments which Thomson every where inculcates a sufficient explanation of his hostility, whilst his country may have been another ground for his dislike. Before dismissing Dr. Johnson's Life it is material to state, that his assertions respecting Thomson are entitled to little credit when opposed by other testimony; for it can be proved that he knew little about him, and that he was too negligent to avail himself of the information which he sought. It must be remem-

bered, too, that Johnson never saw him; and that whatever he may have learned from others avails nothing in comparison with the account of his personal and intimate friends whose esteem is in itself ample evidence of his virtues.

James Thomson was the son of the Reverend Mr. Thomson, of Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, at which place the Poet was born on the 11th of September, 1700. Less has been said of his parents than they merit, and from the slight manner in which they have been noticed the idea may have arisen that he was of obscure origin. His father was well descended, and his mother was Beatrix, the daughter and coheiress of Mr. Trotter, of Fogo,* a genteel family in the neighbourhood of Greenlaw in Berwickshire. Though Mr. Thomson's worth was of that unostentatious kind which only entitles him to the praise of being a good father, a good husband, and a good man, fulfilling his clerical duties with pious diligence, and who

> "This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,
> That first he wrought and afterwards he taught,"

* Mrs. Thomson's sister married first a Mr. Hume, and secondly the Rev. Mr. Nicolson, Minister of Preston and Buncle. Their daughter Elizabeth married her namesake, Robert Nicholson, of Lonend near Berwick-on-Tweed, the great grandfather of Alexander Nicholson, Esq. of East Court, Charlton Regis.

nearly all the sterling parts of human excellence are comprised in that character.

At an early period of the Poet's life his dawning talents attracted the attention of Mr. Riccarton, a neighbouring clergyman and a judicious friend of his father, who consented to his superintending his son's education. He was placed at school in Jedburgh, and the care this gentleman bestowed on him was well rewarded by the success which attended his exertions.

Nor was Mr. Riccarton his only patron. Sir William Bennet, of Chesters, near Jedburgh, who was distinguished for his wit, honoured him with his kindness, and invited him to spend his summer vacations at his seat. Under the auspices of these generous friends and of Sir Gilbert Eliot of Minto, Thomson wrote various pieces; but on the first of every January he destroyed the labours of the preceding year, and celebrated the annual conflagration by some humorous verses, stating his reasons for their condemnation. A poetical epistle, addressed to Sir William Bennet, and written in his fourteenth year, has however been lately discovered, and it will be found in this edition of his works.

From Jedburgh he was sent to the university of Edinburgh, being intended for the church; but, before he had been two years there, he lost his father, who died so suddenly that he did not see him before his decease, a circumstance which

so much increased his grief that he is said to have evinced his affliction in an extraordinary manner. His widowed mother, who was left with nine children slenderly provided for, was advised to remove to Edinburgh, where she remained, living in an economical manner, until James had completed his studies.

Whilst at the University, Thomson contributed three articles to a volume entitled "The Edinburgh Miscellany," printed in that city in 1720, by a club called the Athenian Society. One of them, "On a Country Life, by a Student of the University," and signed with the initial of his name, shows how early the love of rural scenery and pursuits took possession of his mind, and may be deemed the first conceptions of "The Seasons." His productions were rather severely treated by some learned persons into whose hands they fell, and one of his biographers has laboured to prove the want of taste of his judges. This charge is, probably, unjust, for the early pieces of the author of The Seasons afford slight indication of his future powers, and the criticism was far from destroying his attachment to the muses. An accident, connected with the indulgence of his taste, made him suddenly renounce the profession for which he was designed, and his views became directed to London. Mr. Hamilton, the Divinity Professor of Edinburgh, having given Thomson the 104th Psalm as an

exercise, he made so poetical a paraphrase of it, that the professor and the audience were equally surprised. After complimenting the writer, he told him that if he expected to be useful in the ministry he must restrain his imagination, and adopt language more suited to a country congregation; and, according to Dr. Johnson, Mr. Hamilton censured one of the expressions as indecent, if not profane. Part of this paraphrase only has been printed, but a perfect copy will be found in the present edition, not on account of its merits, which are far from conspicuous, but from the circumstances connected with it. The obnoxious line will, however, be sought for in vain; but it may have been altered in this transcript.

This piece having fallen under the notice of Mr. Auditor Benson, he expressed his admiration of it, and added, that if the author came to London, he had no doubt his merit would be properly encouraged. This remark was communicated to Thomson, apparently, by Lady Grizel Baillie, a relation of his mother's, and he accordingly embarked at Leith in the Autumn of 1725; but as, on his arrival in the metropolis, he received no assistance from her ladyship, he found himself without money or friends. To what extent he suffered the stings of poverty is uncertain; and his zealous admirer, the Earl of Buchan, is very indignant at the assertion, that

"his first want was a pair of shoes." Johnson, on whose authority it rests, is not likely to have invented the statement; and, as it reflects no discredit on the Poet, whether it arose from a temporary exhaustion of his finances or from the impossibility of recruiting them, excepting by the sale of one of his works, his Lordship's anger is misplaced.

That he was stored with letters of introduction may be supposed; but, having tied them up in a handkerchief, they were stolen from him, an accident sufficiently disastrous to a young stranger, in the metropolis, to explain the condition in which he is represented to have found himself.

Shortly after Thomson left Edinburgh he lost his mother, whom he loved with all a son's tenderness, and to whose talents and virtues he was eminently indebted for the cultivation of his own. In the poem which he wrote to her memory he thus feelingly adverts to the moment when he took his last leave of her:—

> "When on the margin of the briny flood
> Chill'd with a sad presaging damp I stood,
> Took the last look, ne'er to behold her more,
> And mix'd our murmurs with the wavy roar,
> Heard the last words fall from her pious tongue,
> Then, wild into the bulging vessel flung,
> Which soon, too soon, convey'd me from her sight,
> Dearer than life, and liberty, and light!"

A very interesting letter from Thomson to his friend Dr. Cranston, written about this time,

proves that he was nearly destitute of money; and it is extremely deserving of attention from the statement, that the idea of writing The Seasons originated from reading a poem on Winter, by Mr. Rickleton, which sets at rest the dispute whether that poem was composed before or after his arrival in London.* It is without a date, but must have been written in September 1726; and, as the post mark was Barnet,† it seems he then resided in that village.

"Dear Sir,

"I WOULD chide you for the slackness of your correspondence; but, having blamed you wrongfully last time, I shall say nothing until I hear from you, which I hope will be soon.

* A writer in the Literary Gazette asserts that "Winter" was written previous to this period, during the vacations, when Thomson retired from Edinburgh to Roxburghshire, where it is a current tale that he composed the awful picture of the man perishing in the snow, while on a visit to a friend among the wild hills about Yetholm, eight or nine miles from Kelso and Ednam, the place of his birth. Faulkner, however, in his Historical and Topographical Account of Fulham, p. 359, says:—"In a room in the Dove Coffee-house, situated facing the water-side, between the Upper and Lower Mall at Hammersmith, Thomson wrote his Winter. He was in the habit of frequenting this house during the winter season, when the Thames was frozen, and the surrounding country covered with snow. This fact is well authenticated, and many persons visit the house to the present day."

† Query, Barnes, on the banks of the Thames?

"There is a little business I would communicate to you before I come to the more entertaining part of our correspondence. I am going, hard task! to complain, and beg your assistance. When I came up here I brought very little money along with me, expecting some more upon the selling of Widehope, which was to have been sold that day my mother was buried. Now it is unsold yet; but will be disposed of as soon as it can be conveniently done, though indeed it is perplexed with some difficulties. I was a long time here living at my own charges, and you know how expensive that is; this, together with the furnishing of myself with clothes, linen, one thing and another, to fit me for any business of this nature here, necessarily obliged me to contract some debts. Being a stranger here, it is a wonder how I got any credit; but I cannot expect it will be long sustained unless I immediately clear it. Even now, I believe, it is at a crisis. My friends have no money to send me till the land is sold, and my creditors will not wait till then: you know what the consequences would be. Now the assistance I would beg of you, and which I know, if in your power, you will not refuse me, is a letter of credit on some merchant, banker, or such like person in London, for the matter of twelve pounds, till I get money upon the selling of the land, which I am at last certain of. If you could either give it me yourself, or procure it, though you do not owe it to

my merit, yet you owe it to your own nature, which I know so well as to say no more on the subject; only allow me to add that when I first fell upon such a project, the only thing I have for it in my present circumstances, knowing the selfish, inhumane temper of the generality of the world, you were the first person that offered to my thoughts as one to whom I had the confidence to make such an address.

"Now I imagine you seized with a fine, romantic, kind of a melancholy on the fading of the year; now I figure you wandering, philosophical and pensive, amidst the brown, withered groves, while the leaves rustle under your feet, the sun gives a farewell parting gleam, and the birds

Stir the faint note, and but attempt to sing.

"Then again, when the heavens wear a more gloomy aspect, the winds whistle, and the waters spout, I see you in the well known Cleugh, beneath the solemn arch of tall, thick, embowering trees, listening to the amusing lull of the many steep, moss-grown cascades; while deep, divine contemplation, the genius of the place, prompts each swelling awful thought. I am sure you would not resign your part in that scene at an easy rate. None ever enjoyed it to the height you do, and you are worthy of it. There I walk in spirit, and disport in its beloved gloom. This

country I am in is not very entertaining; no variety but that of woods, and them we have in abundance; but where is the living stream? the airy mountain? and the hanging rock? with twenty other things that elegantly please the lover of nature. Nature delights me in every form, I am just now painting her in her most lugubrious dress for my own amusement, describing Winter as it presents itself. After my first proposal of the subject,

> I sing of Winter, and his gelid reign,
> Nor let a rhyming insect of the Spring
> Deem it a barren theme. To me 'tis full
> Of manly charms; to me, who court the shade,
> Whom the gay seasons suit not, and who shun
> The glare of Summer. Welcome, kindred glooms!
> Drear, awful, wintry horrors, welcome all! &c.

"After this introduction, I say, which insists for a few lines further, I prosecute the purport of the following ones:

> Nor can I, O, departing Summer! choose
> But consecrate one pitying line to you;
> Sing your last temper'd days, and sunny calms,
> That cheer the spirits and serene the soul.

"Then terrible floods, and high winds, that usually happen about this time of the year, and have already happened here, I wish you have not felt them too dreadfully; the first produced the inclosed lines; the last are not completed. Mr.

Rickleton's Poem on Winter, which I still have, first put the design into my head. In it are some masterly strokes that awakened me: being only a present amusement, it is ten to one but I drop it whenever another fancy comes across.

"I believe it had been much more for your entertainment if in this letter I had cited other people instead of myself, but I must refer that until another time. If you have not seen it already, I have just now in my hands an original of Sir Alexander Brand's, the crazed Scots knight with the woeful countenance, you would relish. I believe it might make Miss John catch hold of his knees, which I take in him to be a degree of mirth only inferior to falling back again with an elastic spring. It is very printed in the Evening Post, so perhaps you have seen these panegyrics of our declining bard; one on the princess's birthday, the other on his majesty's, in cantos: they are written in the spirit of a complicated craziness.

"I was in London lately a night, and in the old playhouse saw a comedy acted, called 'Love makes a Man, or the Fop's Fortune,' where I beheld Miller and Cibber shine to my infinite entertainment. In and about London this month of September near a hundred people have died by accident and suicide. There was one blacksmith, tired of the hammer, who hanged himself, and left written behind him this concise epitaph,

I, Joe Pope,
Lived without hope,
And died by a rope.

or else some epigrammatic muse has belied him.

" Mr. Muir has ample fund for politics in the present posture of affairs, as you will find by the public news. I should be glad to know that great minister's frame just now. Keep it to yourself. You may whisper it, too, in Miss John's ear: far otherwise is his late mysterious brother Mr. Tait employed,—started a superannuated fortune, and just now upon the full scent. It is comical enough to see him from amongst the rubbish of his controversial divinity and politics, furbishing up his ancient rustic gallantry.

Yours sincerely,
J. T.

" Remember me to all friends, Mr. Rickle, Miss John, Brother John, &c."

Thomson's earliest patron in London was Mr. Forbes, afterwards Lord President of the Session; who is thus immortalized in the Seasons,

" Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth sincere, as weeping friendship kind,
Thee, truly generous, and in silence great,
Thy country feels through her reviving arts,
Plann'd by thy wisdom, by thy soul inform'd;
And seldom has she known a friend like thee."

Having seen his poetry in Scotland, he received him with kindness, recommended him to his

friends, and particularly to Mr. Aikman, a gentleman moving in high society, whose taste for descriptive poetry was generated by his pursuits as a painter. The friendship of Aikman was highly appreciated by Thomson; and on his death, in June 1731, he wrote some verses which are indicative of that fervid attachment for which he was remarkable.

Among other persons to whom he was indebted for countenance and attention were Mr. Mallet, his school fellow, then private tutor to the Duke of Montrose and his Grace's brother Lord George Graham. By Mallet he is supposed to have been introduced to, and made acquainted with, the characters of many brother poets and other wits of the day; and he was assisted by him in negotiating the publication of his first work. He resided, at this time, in Lancaster Court in the Strand.

The poem of Winter, which, reversing the natural order, proved the harbinger of "The Seasons," appeared in folio in March, 1726-7; but it remained unsold till Mr. Whateley, a gentleman of acknowledged taste, and the author of "Observations on Modern Gardening," discerned its beauties, and made them the subject of conversation in the circles in which he visited. Though materially improved in subsequent editions, its merits were sufficiently striking to establish the author's fame; but it is stated that he received no more than three guineas for his labours. It was dedicated to

Sir Spencer Compton, then Speaker of the House of Commons, and afterwards Earl of Wilmington, but his motive for selecting him as a patron is unknown; and it would seem, from Aaron Hill's lines which he affixed to the second edition of "Winter," that he was doubtful to what great person he should address it. In the preface to that edition, which appeared in the same year, he entered into a long defence of poetry, complained of the debasing subjects to which it was chiefly applied, and contended, in rapturous language, that the works of nature are most calculated to produce poetical enthusiasm. According to the fashion of the time, he prefixed to the second impression some commendatory verses by Hill, Mr. Mallet, and a lady who styled herself Mira.*

Johnson asserts that "Winter" was unnoticed by Sir Spencer Compton until Aaron Hill roused his attention by some verses addressed to Thomson, and published in one of the newspapers, which censured the great for their neglect of ingenious men: but it is obvious, from the verses themselves, that they were written before Thomson had fixed on a patron; and there is nothing to justify the opinion that he was indebted to Hill for Sir Spencer's subsequent notice of him. In a letter addressed to Hill he says:

"I hinted to you in my last, that on Saturday

* Dr. Johnson says Mira was the fictitious name of a lady once too well known; Savage addressed verses to her on reading her poems, and Aaron Hill also wrote some lines on her.

morning I was with Sir Spencer Compton. A certain gentleman, without my desire, spoke to him concerning me; his answer was, that I had never come near him. Then the gentleman put the question, if he desired that I should wait on him? he returned, he did. On this, the gentleman gave me an introductory letter to him. He received me in what they commonly call a civil manner; asked me some common-place questions, and made me a present of twenty guineas. I am very ready to own, that the present was larger than my performance deserved; and shall ascribe it to his generosity, or any other cause, rather than the merit of the address."

"Winter"* was universally read and almost as universally admired, and its reputation produced to the author the acquaintance of several ladies of rank, among whom were the Countess of Hertford, Miss Drelincourt, daughter of the Dean of Armagh, who became Viscountess Primrose, and Mrs. Stanley; but the most valuable effect of that publication was the friendship of Dr. Thomas Rundle, afterwards Bishop of Derry. That learned individual, finding the man to be as estimable as the Poet, honoured him with his friendship, promulgated his fame by his encomiums, and by introducing him to Sir Charles,

* To this edition Thomson added the letters "M. A." to his name, but the distinction was omitted on every other occasion.

subsequently Lord Chancellor, Talbot, eventually rendered him an important service.

Stimulated by public applause, Thomson next year published his "Summer," the "Poem on the Death of Sir Isaac Newton," and his "Britannia." It is said that having been private tutor to Lord Binning, the eldest son of the Earl of Haddington, but at what period has not been ascertained, he was desirous of evincing his gratitude by inscribing "Summer" to that nobleman. Lord Binning, however, generously sacrificed the distinction to his desire of advancing the Poet's interests, and at his lordship's suggestion, it was dedicated to the well known Mr. Bubb Dodington, then a Lord of the Treasury, in that humiliating strain of panegyric to which, happily, authors no longer submit. Whether the change has been produced by the extinction of patrons, or from a worthier cause, the effect is to rescue literature from the degradation of paying sycophantic homage to titled dullness or aristocratic impertinence; and it is left to societies established for the promotion of science to debase themselves by a fawning deference to rank, which an individual would feel himself disgraced by imitating.

In his eulogy on Newton, Thomson was assisted by his friend Gray, who, being well acquainted with the Newtonian Philosophy, furnished him with a sufficient idea of its principles

to enable him to allude to the subject with correctness. "Britannia" owed its existence to the displeasure of the English merchants at the interruption of our trade by the Spaniards in America. Thomson was particularly alive to impressions of public liberty, and eagerly availed himself of a moment of political excitement to indulge his feelings.

In 1728, he published his "Spring," which he inscribed to Frances, Countess of Hertford, wife of Algernon, then Earl of Hertford, afterwards Duke of Somerset. This lady, whose generous intercession in favour of Savage preserved his life, not only patronized poetry, but was herself a votary of the Muses,* and her letters create a very favourable impression both of her heart and her understanding. If the dedication may be relied on, Spring "grew up under her encouragement," and Thomson was one summer the guest of her ladyship at her country seat; but Johnson says he took more pleasure in carousing with her lord than in assisting her studies, and

* The Countess of Hertford, according to her own admission, was the authoress of the pieces entitled "A Rural Meditation," "A Penitential Thought," "A Midnight Hymn," and "The Dying Christian's Hope," inserted in Watts' Miscellanies, and there assigned to Eusebia. See a letter from her ladyship to Dr. Watts, in February, 1736, printed in the Elegant Epistles, vol. v. p. 525. On the 15th of May, 1748, the Countess of Hertford, in a letter to Lady Luxborough, noticed Thomson's Castle of Indolence in the following terms:—"I conclude you will read Mr. Thomson's

therefore was never again invited: a charge which Lord Buchan eagerly repels, but upon as little authority as it was originally made.

Previous to the appearance of "Spring," Thomson issued proposals for publishing the "Four Seasons" by subscription; and in the advertisement, he pledged himself that the separate publication of that poem should not prevent the work being completed in the ensuing winter.

The tragedy of Sophonisba, which was written and acted in 1729, was his next production; and such were the expectations which the author's fame excited, that the rehearsals were attended by splendid audiences: though, if Johnson be correct, nobody was much affected, and the company rose as if from a moral lecture. Among those who honoured the tragedy with particular regard was the Queen, to whom, on that account, it was dedicated; and in the preface the author pleads in extenuation of the errors of the piece, that it was a first attempt: he explains his reasons for choosing that subject, and thanks Mr. Wilks, and more especially Mrs. Oldfield,

Castle of Indolence: it is after the manner of Spenser; but I think he does not always keep so close to his style as the author of the School Mistress, whose name I never knew till you were so good as to inform me of it.——I believe the Castle of Indolence will afford you much entertainment: there are many pretty paintings in it; but I think the wizard's song deserves a preference:

'He needs no muse who dictates from the heart.'"

for their powerful representations of Massinissa and Sophonisba, the latter having, he says, "excelled what even in the fondness of an author he could either wish or imagine."

The success of this tragedy on the stage was not great, though it went through four editions in the year 1730, and Johnson ascribes one cause of its failure to a foolish parody of the silly line, omitted in subsequent impressions,

"Oh, Sophonisba, Sophonisba, O!"

"O Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O?"

which was very generally repeated through the town. Pope, the same writer says, on the assertion of Savage, wrote the first part of the prologue, but, as he could not be persuaded to finish it, the remaining lines were added by Mallet.

The "Seasons" were completed in 1730, when "Autumn," which he addressed to the Right Honourable Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, was first printed. A very material difference exists between "the Seasons" as they first appeared and as they now stand. From time to time Thomson polished this work with great assiduity and success, perhaps from the anticipation that by it he would be best known to posterity. To this labour he was probably excited by an epistle from Somervile, who asks,

"Why should thy Muse, born so divinely fair,
Want the reforming toilet's daily care!

Dress the gay maid, improve each native grace,
And call forth all the glories of her face:
The accomplish'd nymph in all her best attire,
Courts shall applaud, and prostrate crowds admire;
For kind and wise the parent, who reproves
The slightest blemish in the child he loves.
Read Philips much, consider Milton more,
But from their dross extract the purer ore.
Let perspicuity o'er all preside,—
Soon shalt thou be the nation's joy and pride."

Johnson admits that these revisions improved the poems in general: but he expresses his suspicion that they lost their *race*. A few examples of the benefit which they derived from reflection and criticism prove that this remark displays more ingenuity than taste; and as instances of the difference between early and subsequent editions of a Poet's lucubrations, they are sufficiently curious to deserve the space they will occupy.*

About this time, through the influence of Dr. Rundle, who, on sending Mrs. Sandys a copy of "The Seasons," observed, that it was "a volume on which reason bestows as many beauties as imagination," Thomson was selected by Sir Charles Talbot, then Solicitor General, to accompany his eldest son, Mr. Charles Richard Talbot, on his travels. With this accomplished young man he visited most of the capitals in Europe, in the year 1731. Admitted to the best society

* See the end of the volume.

wherever they went, unembarrassed by pecuniary considerations, and encouraged by the rising influence and generosity of his patron, to hope for a permanent independence, if not for a situation calculated for the display of talent, this must have been the happiest period of the Poet's life, since nothing more can be desired than youth, fame, health, and competence in possession, with a bright perspective of future renown.

During his absence from England he appears to have kept up a correspondence with Mr. Bubb Dodington, to whom he dedicated his "Spring;" and his letters which tend to show that he was on terms of intimacy with that gentleman are entitled to attention. They justify a more favourable opinion of his epistolary powers than any others which have appeared, and are very interesting from his account of the impression which foreign scenes made on his mind, and of his future intentions with respect to literature.

Paris, Dec. 27, N. S. 1730.

"M. de Voltaire's Brutus has been acted here seven or eight times with applause, and still continues to be acted. It is matter of amusement to me to imagine what ideas an old republican, declaiming on liberty, must give the generality of a French audience. Voltaire, in his preface, designs to have a stroke at criticism; and Lord have mercy on the poor similes at the end of the acts in our English plays, for these seem to be

very worthy objects of his French indignation. It is designed to be dedicated to Lord Bolingbroke.

"I have seen little of Paris, yet some streets and playhouses; though, had I seen all that is to be seen here, you know it too well to need a much better account than I can give. You must, however, give me leave to observe, that amid all the external and showy magnificence which the French affect, one misses that solid magnificence of trade and sincere plenty which not only appear to be, but are, substantially, in a kingdom where industry and liberty mutually support and inspirit each other. That kingdom I suppose I need not mention, as it is and ever will be sufficiently plain from the character. I shall return no worse Englishman than I came away.

"Your observation I find every day juster and juster, that one may profit more abroad by seeing than by hearing; and yet there are scarce any travellers to be met with, who have given a landscape of the countries through which they have travelled that have seen, as you express it, with the Muses' eye; though that is the first thing which strikes me, and what all readers and travellers in the first place demand. It seems to me, that such a poetical landscape of countries, mixed with moral observations on their countries and people, would not be an ill judged undertaking. But then, the description of the different face of nature, in different countries, must be

particularly marked and characteristic, the portrait painting of nature."

Oct. 24, 1731.

"What you observe concerning the pursuit of poetry, so far engaged in it as I am, is certainly just. Besides, let him quit it who can, and 'erit mihi magnus Apollo,' or something as great. A true genius, like light, must be beaming forth, as a false one is an incurable disease. One would not, however, climb Parnassus, any more than your mortal hills, to fix for ever on the barren top. No; it is some little dear retirement in the vale below that gives the right relish to the prospect, which, without that, is nothing but enchantment; and though pleasing for some time, at last leaves us in a desert. The great fat doctor of Bath,* told me that poets should be kept poor, the more to animate their genius. This is like the cruel custom of putting a bird's eye out, that it may sing the sweeter; but, surely, they sing sweetest amid the luxuriant woods, while the full spring blooms around them.

"Travelling has long been my fondest wish, for the very purpose you recommend. The storing one's imagination with ideas all-beautiful, all-great, and all-perfect nature: these are the true materia poetica, the light and colours, with which fancy kindles up her whole creation, paints a

* Query Dr. Cheyne?

sentiment, and even embodies an abstracted thought. I long to see the fields where Virgil gathered his immortal honey, and tread the same ground where men have thought and acted so greatly.

"But not to travel entirely like a poet, I resolve not to neglect the more prosaic advantages of it, for it is no less my ambition to be capable of serving my country in an active, than in a contemplative, way. At my times of leisure abroad, I think of attempting another tragedy, and a story more addressed to common passions than 'Sophonisba.' The Sophonisba people now-a-days must have something like themselves, and a public spirited monster can never interest them. If any thing could make me capable of an epic performance, it would be your favourable opinion in thinking so. But, as you justly observe, that must be the work of years, and one must be in an epic situation to execute it. My heart both trembles with diffidence, and burns with ardour at the thought. The story of Timoleon is good as to the subject matter, but an author owes, I think, the scene of an epic action to his own country; besides, Timoleon admits of no machinery except that of the heathen gods, which will not do at this time of day. I hope, hereafter, to have the direction of your taste in these affairs; and in the meantime, will endeavour to expand those ideas and sentiments, and in some

degree to gather up that knowledge which is necessary to such an undertaking.

"Should the scenes and climates through which I pass inspire me with any poetry, it will naturally have recourse to you. But to hint a return from Young or Stubbs were a kind of poetical simony, especially when you yourself possess such a portion of the spirit."

Rome, Nov. 28, 1731.

"I WILL make no apology for neglecting to do myself the honour of writing to you since we left Paris. I may rather plead a merit in not troubling you with long scrawls of that travelling stuff, of which the world is full even to loathing. That enthusiasm which I had upon me, with regard to travelling, goes off, I find, very fast. One may imagine fine things in reading ancient authors; but to travel is to dissipate that vision. A great many antique statues, where several of the fair ideas of Greece are fixed for ever in marble, and the paintings of the first masters, are, indeed, most enchanting objects. How little, however, of these suffices! How unessential to life! they are, surely, not of that importance as to set the whole world, man, woman, and child, a-gadding. I should be sorry to be Goth enough to think them highly ornamental in life, when one can have them at home without paying for them at an extravagant price. But for every one who

can support it to make a trade of running abroad only to stare at them, I cannot help thinking something worse than a public folly. Instead of travelling so furiously, it were wiser and more public-spirited should they, with part of those sums of money spent that way, send persons of genius in architecture, painting, and sculpture, to study those arts abroad, and import them into England. Did they but once take root here, how they might flourish in such a generous and wealthy country! The nature of the great painter, architect, and statuary, is the same she ever was; and is no doubt as profuse of beauty, proportion, lovely forms, and real genius, as formerly she was to the sunny realms of Greece, did we but study the one and exert the other. In England, if we cannot reach the gracefully superfluous, yet I hope we shall never lose the substantial, necessary, and vital arts of life; such as depend on labour, liberty, and all commanding trade. For my part, I, who have no taste for smelling to an old musty stone, look upon these countries with an eye to poetry, in regard that the sisters reflect light and images to one another. Now I mention poetry, should you inquire after my Muse, all that I can answer is, that I believe she did not cross the channel with me. I know not whether your gardener at Eastbury has heard any thing of her among the woods there; she has not thought fit to visit me while I have been in this

once poetic land, nor do I feel the least presage that she will. But not to lengthen out a letter that has no pretence to entertain you, give me leave only to add, that I can never lose the pleasing sense I have of your goodness to me; and it is a hope that I must flatter myself with your continuance of it upon my return to England; for which my veneration and love, I will be vain enough to say, increase every day, even to fondness and devotion."

Thomson returned to England in 1732, with his general information much increased and his opinion of mankind considerably enlarged. New scenes rather excited than lessened his poetic ardour; and no sooner was he settled than he resumed his pen, choosing for his subject "Liberty."

It has been erroneously supposed by every biographer of Thomson, that immediately on his return he obtained the sinecure situation of Secretary of Briefs in the Court of Chancery, and that soon after he commenced his poem his young friend Mr. Talbot died. The slightest attention to dates will show the error of these statements. Sir Charles Talbot did not become Chancellor until the 29th of November, 1733, shortly before which time Mr. Talbot died; so that in fact "Liberty" must have been nearly finished before his decease, and he did not live to witness the service which his father conferred on

Thomson by appointing him to the office alluded to. The truth then appears to be, that actuated either by gratitude to his patron, or by regard for his accomplished son, or probably by both feelings, the Poet resolved to evince his respect for the living and the dead, by prefixing to the first part of "Liberty" an address which should commemorate their worth and his esteem. Mr. Talbot, died in his twenty-fourth year, and Thomson's eulogy of him is marked by simplicity and tenderness.

Though the most laboured, and in its author's opinion the best of his productions, "Liberty" was never popular, and perhaps most persons have found it as difficult to read to an end as Dr. Johnson did, who eagerly avails himself of the neglect with which it was treated to indulge in one of those sneers which render his account of Thomson a memorial of his want of candour and injustice. It was inscribed to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and probably enabled Mr. Lyttelton to introduce him to the notice of his Royal Highness. However grieved at the coldness of the public towards his favourite work, and that he felt it severely is beyond a doubt, one at least of his friends gave him every consolation which the most extravagant praises can afford. That exquisite flatterer, Aaron Hill, whose taste and judgment gave zest to his eulogy, thus wrote to Thomson on the 17th of February, 1734; and it

is amusing to compare the opinion of a distinguished contemporary with that of posterity on the same subject.

" Dear Sir,

" You have lately given me two pleasures; for one of them I am indebted to fortune, who brought me near you, though not quite near enough, the other night, at the playhouse. The second I owe to a hand, I am infinitely more proud to be obliged by; for I received your beautiful present of Liberty from its author. It will be, in all senses, an ornament to my study. It will, also, be such to my heart and my memory; for I shall never be able to think of a loveliness in moral, a frankness in social, or a penetration in political life, to which you have not, in this inimitable masterpiece, both of language and genius, given a force, and a delicacy, which few shall be born with a capacity to feel, and none ever with a capacity to exceed.

" I do not know a pleasure I should enjoy with more pride than that of filling up the leisure of a well employed year, in exerting the critic, on your poem; in considering it first, with a view to the vastness of its conception, in the general plan; secondly, to the grandeur, the depth, the unleaning, self-supported richness of the sentiments; and thirdly, to the strength the elegance, the music, the comprehensive living energy, and close propriety of your expression. I look

upon this mighty work as the last stretched blaze of our expiring genius. It is the dying effort of despairing and indignant virtue, and will stand, like one of those immortal pyramids, which carry their magnificence through times that wonder to see nothing round them but uncomfortable desert!

"Yet you must give me leave, while I but admire your genius, to love your soul, that has such compass of humanity! your poem is not newer than your mind, nor your expression stronger than your virtue. Whatever school-enthusiasm has misdreamt of Homer, that he knew all arts, and that his works have taught their practice, might be almost said and proved of Mr. Thomson's 'Liberty,' without partiality or flattery; whatever has been suffered, done, or thought, through all the revolutions of forgotten time, your more than magic muse revokes, reacts, and animates, till we become cotemporaries of every busy age, and see, and feel the changes, which they shone or sunk by.

"It is possible that this devoted nation, irrecoverably lost in luxury, may, like your

——Little artist form,
On higher life intent, its silken tomb.

It may rise to future animation, and, its wealth, its pride, and commerce lost, lose also its corruption, and retriumph, in the strength of undesiring poverty. For, certainly, you have detected

the sole root of every English evil you deplore so beautifully:

> Whenever puff'd with power, and gorged with wealth,
> Nations, like ours, let trade enormous rise,
> And east and south their mingled treasure pour;
> Then, swell'd impetuous, the corrupting flood
> Bursts o'er the city, and devours the land.

"Think, seriously, upon this observation, and try if, in all your acquaintance with past ages, you can find a people long at once retaining public virtue and extended commerce. Search, too, as much in vain for one who is, with warmer truth, and better founded zeal, than I am,

Dear Sir,
Your most obedient
And most humble Servant,
A. Hill.

In another letter, dated in the following January, Hill pointed out some slight defects in "Liberty;" and in September, 1735, after referring to a copy of "Zara," which he submitted for Thomson's perusal, he observed, "The warmth you express against the corruption and degeneracy of our stage is an indignation both natural and necessary in a breast—

> 'The bounds of self divinely bursting!'

yet fain would I hope, it is not in the prophetic spirit of the character, that a poet, like you, asserts, 'The root of this evil is too deep to be

pluck'd up;'" and he then approves, with the bitterness of a disappointed author, of the anathema which Thomson had pronounced against the dramatic taste of the time. On the same occasion he suggested the establishment of a tragic academy, and asked him if he thought the Prince of Wales would give his support to the plan:—a remark indicative of Thomson's being sufficiently connected with the Prince to be aware of his sentiments. A letter from Hill in May 1736, proves that, in consequence of the failure of "Liberty" as a speculation, the author generously resolved to secure the publisher from loss:

"One of the natural growths of such a mind, as we see in your writings, is the generosity of your purpose, in favour of the bookseller. I am in love with the humanity that inspired such a sentiment; but, for the sake of my country, wish it may never be carried into execution, because the beauty of the action would, of necessity, prevent its ever being forgotten; and a kind of national infamy, which must disgrace us to posterity, will, as infallibly, be a consequence of its being remembered.

"I confess myself sincerely mortified to hear that such a poem as 'Liberty,' in such a nation as Great Britain, can have failed to make a bookseller as rich as an ungrateful people have been made by its invaluable fund of manly sentiments; but there are dispositions, in political as

well as natural bodies, which have prevalence to help or hinder the effect of medicines: and I am apprehensive, that republican improvements upon monarchical foundations will but spoil two different orders, either of which, alone, might have had strength and gracefulness."

He proceeds to comply with Thomson's request, to send him his criticisms in the event of a second edition; and it appears from this letter, that he had complained that the works of authors were not secured to them, as Hill says,

"Would to God you were in the right, in that part of your letter which wishes, in lieu of state patronage, in favour of learning, that we had only some good act of parliament for securing to authors the property of their own works. Methinks if the act would go deep enough to reach the very root of your wish, it should, also, secure to the public the education of her gentlemen as well as the property of her writers; since, where the first are unable to taste, the last must write to no purpose."

Two other paragraphs in this communication refer to Thomson's acquaintance with eminent poets of the day:

"I am pleased to hear that Mr. Pope was so kind as to make any inquiries concerning me. Your good nature was justly and generously employed in the mention you make of poor Mr. Savage."

The remarks of Johnson on the alteration and

curtailment made by Lord Lyttelton in "Liberty" are too just not to produce conviction, and in this edition as well as most others his wish to see it exhibited as its author left it is realised.

A letter which the Poet wrote to his friend Mr. Ross about this period displays the affection which he bore to his relations, and proves his readiness to contribute to their support. The tragedy to which he alludes was "Agamemnon."

"Dear Ross, London, Nov. 6, 1736.

I own I have a good deal of assurance, after asking one favour of you, never to answer your letter till I ask another. But not to mince the matter, and all apologies apart, hearken to my request.—My sisters have been advised by their friends to set up at Edinburgh a little milliner's shop; and if you can conveniently advance to them twelve pounds, on my account, it will be a particular favour. That will set them a-going, and I design from time to time to send them goods from hence. My whole account I will pay you when you come up here, not in poetical paper credit, but in the solid money of this dirty world. I will not draw upon you, in case you be not prepared to defend yourself; but if your purse be valiant, please to inquire for Jean or Elizabeth Thomson, at the Reverend Mr. Gusthart's; and if this letter be not a sufficient testimony of the debt, I will send you whatever you desire.

"It is late, and I would not lose this post. Like

a laconic man of business, therefore, I must here stop short; though I have several things to impart to you, and, through your canal, to the dearest, truest, heartiest youth that treads on Scottish ground. The next letter I write you shall be washed clean from business in the Castalian fountain.

"I am whipping and spurring to finish a tragedy for you this winter, but am still at some distance from the goal, which makes me fear being distanced. Remember me to all friends, and above them all to Mr. Forbes. Though my affection to him is not fanned by letters, yet is it as high as when I was his brother in the virtu, and played at chess with him in a post-chaise.

I am, dear Ross,
Most sincerely and affectionately yours,
JAMES THOMSON."

On the 12th of the following January, he again wrote to Ross.

"Having been entirely in the country of late, finishing my play, I did not receive yours till some days ago. It was kind in you not to draw rashly upon me, which at present had put me into danger; but very soon, that is to say about two months hence, I shall have a golden buckler, and you may draw boldly. My play is received in Drury Lane, and will be put into my Lord Chamberlain's or his deputy's hands to-morrow.

Petty* came here two or three days ago; I have not yet seen the round man of God to be. He is to be parsonified a few days hence. How a gown and cassock will become him; and with what a holy leer he will edify the devout females! There is no doubt of his having a call, for he is immediately to enter upon a tolerable living. God grant him more, and as fat as himself. It rejoices me to see one worthy, honest, excellent man raised, at least, to independence. Pray make my compliments to my Lord President,† and all friends. I shall be glad to hear more at large from you. Just now I am with the Alderman, who wishes you all happiness."

His sisters and his forthcoming tragedy appear still to have divided his thoughts, for in February he thus wrote about both to Mr. Gavin Hamilton:

"I lately heard from my sisters at Edinburgh, that you were so good as to promise to advance to them, on my account, a trifle of money, which I proposed to allow them yearly. The sum is sixteen pounds sterling, and which I would have paid them eight pounds sterling at Martinmas, and the other eight pounds at Whitsuntide, the payment to begin from last Martinmas. So that the first year will be completed at Whitsunday

* "Petty," thus spoken of, was Dr. Patrick Murdoch, the "oily man of God" of the "Castle of Indolence," and one of Thomson's biographers and editors.

† Duncan Forbes.

next. Your doing this I shall look upon as a particular favour, and the money shall be paid here at your order as you please to direct. Please, upon receipt of this, to send to them at Mr. Gusthart's, and to advance to them the payment for last Martinmas, which place to my account. Had I had time this post, I would have written to them to wait upon you. I have a tragedy, entitled Agamemnon, to be represented here about three weeks hence. Please to let me know how many copies I shall send to you, and you shall have them in full time. I have some thoughts of printing it for myself, but if I do not, I will take care you shall have what copies of it you demand. If I can serve you in any thing else here, I shall be very glad."

In 1736 he was one of the committee of managers of the Society for the Encouragement of Learning, his colleagues being either persons of high rank or of considerable literary reputation.

Thomson's next work originated in gratitude. His constant and generous patron, Lord Chancellor Talbot, died in February, 1737, and soon afterwards, the beautiful poem to his memory appeared. Pieces of this nature, however creditable the feelings may be which inspired them, must possess extraordinary intrinsic merit to create interest when all remembrance of the individual whom they celebrate has passed away. This claim is possessed by the article in question, and the same reader who turns from the cold and formal,

though elegant versification of "Liberty," if he commence the tribute to Lord Talbot, will be induced to go on; and should he not think himself repaid by any other passage, he will be amply gratified by the description of the delicate species of patronage which it is fit for wealth or greatness to bestow.

> "Let learning, arts, let universal worth,
> Lament a patron lost, a friend and judge.
> Unlike the sons of vanity, that, veil'd
> Beneath the patron's prostituted name,
> Dare sacrifice a worthy man to pride,
> And flush confusion o'er an honest cheek.
> When he conferr'd a grace, it seem'd a debt
> Which he to merit, to the public, paid,
> And to the great all-bounteous Source of Good.
> His sympathising heart itself received
> The generous obligation he bestow'd.
> This, this indeed, is patronising worth.
> Their kind protector him the Muses own,
> But scorn with noble pride the boasted aid
> Of tasteless Vanity's insulting hand.
> The gracious stream, that cheers the letter'd world,
> Is not the noisy gift of summer's noon,
> Whose sudden current, from the naked root,
> Washes the little soil which yet remained,
> And only more dejects the blushing flowers:
> No, 'tis the soft descending dews at eve,
> The silent treasures of the vernal year,
> Indulging deep their stores, the still night long;
> Till, with returning morn, the freshen'd world
> Is fragrance all, all beauty, joy, and song."

The opportunity is also taken to defend Bishop Rundle, his early patron and the confidential

friend of the chancellor, who incurred the suspicion of heresy, and it is not too much to say, that whilst this piece does honour to the virtues of his heart, it elevates his character as a poet.

His motive for perpetuating the fame of Lord Talbot was wholly disinterested: it was, indeed, a pure offering to that setting sun on whose rays depended all the brightness of his own prospects. With the chancellor he lost the situation which rendered him independent; and though Lord Hardwicke, Talbot's successor, is said to have kept the office open in expectation that Thomson would apply for it, he failed to do so, and it was given to another. From what this neglect of his interests arose must be left to conjecture. It is said that he was listless and indifferent: but he may perhaps have fancied that his eminence was sufficiently great to have induced the new chancellor to offer what his lordship imagined would have been sought, and possibly the Poet was deprived of the office from a mistaken pride on both sides. He might, however, without meanness, have asked to retain what he already possessed, and the other might have had the urbanity to offer to continue that which it was ungenerous to take away; but he who, trusting to the merit of his works, suffers himself to believe that they will procure him that courtesy from rank which in England is reserved for those possessed of wealth, birth, or political influence, will

find himself fatally mistaken, and like Thomson will have cause to deplore his error.

This change in his condition did not however impair his energies or depress his spirits, nor did he alter his manner of living, trusting probably to the sale of his writings to supply his wants. The loss of his situation as Secretary of Briefs renders it probable that it was about this period when he was arrested for debt, and was rescued from a spunging house by Quin, the well known actor. The anecdote is highly creditable to both parties, and is deserving of being recorded, as the origin of a friendship between two distinguished persons, which ended only with their lives; and because it contradicts the aphorism, that a pecuniary obligation is generally repaid by ingratitude.

On learning that Thomson was confined for a debt of about seventy pounds, Quin repaired to the house, and having inquired for, was introduced to him. Thomson was a good deal disconcerted at seeing Quin in such a place, and his embarassment increased when Quin told him he was come to sup with him, being conscious that all the money he was possessed of would scarce procure a good one, and that credit was out of the question. His anxiety was however removed upon Quin's informing him that, as he supposed it would have been inconvenient to have had the supper dressed in the place they were in, he had

ordered it from an adjacent tavern, and as a prelude half a dozen of claret was introduced. Supper being over, Quin said, "It is time now, Jemmy Thomson, we should balance accounts." This not a little astonished the poet, who imagined he had some demand upon him; but Quin, perceiving it, continued, "Sir, the pleasure I have had in perusing your works, I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist upon taking this opportunity of acquitting myself of the debt." On saying this, he put down a note of that value, and hastily took his leave, without waiting for a reply.

The most valuable acquaintance which Thomson ever formed was with Mr., afterwards the celebrated Lord Lyttelton, whom Pope has described as being

> Still true to virtue and as warm as true,

but the precise time or manner of its commencement is no where mentioned. Murdoch says Lyttelton presented him to the Prince of Wales before he was personally known to him; and Johnson states that this occurred after he lost his situation of Secretary of Briefs, which was early in 1737. On being introduced, his Royal Highness inquired into the state of his affairs, and Thomson having answered that "they were in a more poetical posture than formerly," the prince granted him a pension of 100*l.* a year, but of which he lived to be deprived.

In 1738 Agamemnon appeared, but its reception was far from favourable; and a ludicrous story is told of Thomson's agony at witnessing the representation, on the first night, being so great, as to oblige him to excuse his delay in meeting the friends with whom he had promised to sup, saying that his wig had been so disordered by perspiration that he could not appear until he had submitted to the hands of the hairdresser. It is said, too, that such was his excitement upon the occasion, that he audibly accompanied the actors in their recitation, until a friend reminded him of the indiscretion. Pope was present at its appearance, and was honoured by the audience with a general clap, a mark of approbation which, though not uncommon in other countries, is rarely evinced by an English audience to a man who is merely a poet. Agamemnon was inscribed to the Princess of Wales, in a dedication which is good because it is short, and free from the fulsome panegyrics common to such addresses. The prologue was furnished by Mallet; the epilogue, which from not being assigned to any other author, may in its present form be considered Thomson's own, is remarkable for being altered after the first representation; and in all the editions of the play a note occurs, stating that the whole, excepting the six lines with which it commences, "being very justly disliked by the audience, another was substituted in its place." Whether the original epilogue was

written by him is doubtful, and it would seem from the substituted lines, that those which gave place to it were obnoxious from their indelicacy. With much tact he hails their rejection as an indication of a better taste:

> "Thus he began:—And you approved the strain;
> Till the next couplet sunk to light and vain.
> You check'd him there.—To you, to reason just,
> He owns he triumph'd in your kind disgust.
> Charm'd by your frown, by your displeasure graced,
> He hails the rising virtue of your taste;"

and he concluded with congratulating them on the improvement.

Shortly before Agamemnon was produced, Dr. Rundle thus wrote to Mrs. Sandys, whence it appears that that lady had suggested a subject for a play to him, which he once intended to adopt.

"My friend Thomson, the poet, is bringing another untoward heroine on the stage, and has deferred writing on the subject you chose for him, though he had the whole scheme drawn out into acts and scenes, proper turns of passion and sentiments pointed out to him, and the distress made as touching and important, as new, and interesting, and regular, as any that was ever introduced on the stage at Athens, for the instruction of that polite nation. But, perhaps the delicacy of the subject, and the judgment required in saying bold truths, whose boldness should not make them degenerate into offensiveness, deterred him.

His present story is the death of Agamemnon. An adulteress, who murders her husband, is but an odd example to be presented before, and admonish the beauties of Great Britain. However, if he will be advised, it shall not be a shocking, though it cannot be a noble story. He will enrich it with a profusion of worthy sentiments and high poetry, but it will be written in a rough, harsh style, and in numbers great, but careless. He wants that neatness and simplicity of diction which is so natural in dialogue. He cannot throw the light of an elegant ease on his thoughts, which will make the sublimest turns of art appear the genuine unpremeditated dictates of the heart of the speaker. But with all his faults, he will have a thousand masterly strokes of a great genius seen in all he writes; and he will be applauded by those who most censure him."

In the ensuing year, 1739, his play entitled Edward and Eleanora was offered to the stage, but was prohibited from being represented. To understand this measure, it is necessary to allude to the politics of the period. The heir apparent, Frederick, Prince of Wales, lived in open hostility to his father George the Second; his house was the rendezvous of the opposition, and as the advocate of liberal opinions he was the idol of the whigs and other discontented persons. The plot of Edward and Eleanora is derived from the well known story of Eleanor of Castile, the wife of

King Edward the First, having preserved her husband's life in the Holy Land by sucking the poison from his wound. As Edward was then heir apparent to the crown, he stood in the same position as the Prince of Wales; and Thomson availed himself of the circumstance to introduce some passages calculated to strengthen the prince's popularity by encouraging the people to hope for his accession. Of these the most striking are:

" Edward, return; lose not a day, an hour,
Before this city. Though your cause be holy,
Believe me, 'tis a much more pious office,
To save your father's old and broken years,
His mild and easy temper, from the snares
Of low, corrupt, insinuating traitors:
A nobler office far! on the firm base
Of well proportion'd liberty, to build
The common quiet, happiness, and glory
Of king and people, England's rising grandeur.
To you, my Prince, this task, of right, belongs.
Has not the royal heir a juster claim
To share his father's inmost heart and counsels,
Than aliens to his interest, those, who make
A property, a market of his honour?"

" Edward has great, has amiable virtues;
That virtue chiefly which befits a prince—
He loves the people he must one day rule;
With fondness loves them, with a noble pride;
Esteems their good, esteems their glory his."

" Amidst his many virtues, youthful Edward
Is lofty, warm, and absolute of temper:
I therefore seek to moderate his heat,
To guide his fiery virtues, that, misled
By dazzling power and flattering sycophants,

Might finish what his father's weaker measures
Have tried in vain. And hence I here attend him.
O save our country, Edward! save a nation,
The chosen land, the last retreat of freedom,
Amidst a world enslaved!—Cast back thy view,
And trace from farthest times her old renown:
Think of the blood that, to maintain her rights,
And guard her sheltering laws, has flow'd in battle,
Or on the patriot's scaffold: think what cares,
What vigilance, what toils, what bright contention,
In councils, camps, and well disputed senates,
It cost our generous ancestors, to raise
A matchless plan of freedom: whence we shine,
Even in the jealous eye of hostile nations,
The happiest of mankind.—Then see all this,
This virtue, wisdom, toil, and blood of ages,
Behold it ready to be lost for ever.
In this important, this decisive hour,
On thee, and thee alone, our weeping country
Turns her distressful eye; to thee she calls,
And with a helpless parent's piercing voice."

Edward is made to say, in reply,

"O, there is nothing, which for thee, my country,
I, in my proper person, could not suffer!"

Many other political allusions occur, which it was impossible not to understand, and when understood not to apply; hence the suppression of the piece was neither surprising nor unreasonable.*

* Murdoch says, "This refusal drew after it another; and in a way which, as it is related, was rather ludicrous. Mr. Paterson, a companion of Mr. Thomson, afterwards his deputy and then his successor in the general-surveyorship, used to write out fair copies for his friend, when such were wanted for the press or for the stage. This gentleman like-

The remark of Johnson that it was difficult to discover why the play was not allowed to be acted, proves that he never read Thomson's works with the attention which was incumbent upon his biographer. It was, however, printed with a dedication to the Princess of Wales, the moderation of which is its chief merit. He says,

"In the character of Eleanora I have endeavoured to represent, however faintly, a princess distinguished for all the virtues that render greatness amiable. I have aimed, particularly, to do justice to her inviolable affection and generous tenderness for a prince, who was the darling of a great and free people. Their descendants, even now, will own with pleasure how properly this address is made to your Royal Highness."

The loss of whatever fame and profit he may have anticipated in consequence of the prohibition of this Tragedy, was more than made up by the sympathy of the public. To the latter he appeared in a light which never fails to render an Englishman attractive, that of a sufferer for the sake of freedom, and an injured patriot! Johnson states that he endeavoured to repair his pecuniary

wise courted the tragic muse; and had taken for his subject the story of Arminius the German hero. But his play, guiltless as it was, being presented for a license, no sooner had the censor cast his eyes on the hand-writing in which he had seen Edward and Eleonora, than he cried out, 'Away with it!' and the author's profits were reduced to what his bookseller could afford for a tragedy in distress."

loss by a subscription, but he says that he cannot tell its success. Upon the same authority it is related, that "when the public murmured at the unkind treatment of Thomson, one of the ministerial writers remarked, that he had taken a 'liberty' which was not agreeable to Britannia in any season."

From this time until 1745 Thomson did little excepting that about the year 1740 he wrote his "Masque of Alfred," in conjunction with his friend Mallet. This was composed by command of the Prince of Wales for the entertainment of his household at his summer residence, and was performed in the gardens at Clifden on the 1st of August, 1740, before a brilliant audience, consisting of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and their whole suite. This piece, with alterations and new music, was some years afterwards acted at Covent Garden.*

Three letters which Thomson wrote in the year 1742, when he was residing in Kew Lane, have

* It was entirely new modelled by Mallet, no part of the first being retained except a few lines. It was acted at Drury Lane, and published in 8vo. in 1751. Though excellently performed, it was not very successful. The prologue was written by the Earl of Corke. It has been said, that Mallet procured Alfred to be performed at Drury Lane, by insinuating to Garrick, that, in his intended Life of the Duke of Marlborough, he should, by an ingenious device, find a niche for the Roscius of the age. 'My dear friend,' said Garrick, 'have you quite left off writing for the stage?' The hint was taken, and Alfred was produced.—*Biographia Dramatica.*

been printed. Two of them are addressed to Mrs. Robertson, the sister of Miss Young, to whom he was warmly attached, and whose beauty and merits he repeatedly celebrated under the name of Amanda. Those ladies had gone to Bath for their health, and Thomson laments the loss of their society in a lively style: a passage in one of them, in which he speaks of Mrs. Robertson's child, in reference to Miss Young, is worth extracting:

"I cannot help telling you of a very pleasing scene I lately saw.—In the middle of a green field there stands a peaceful lowly habitation; into which having entered, I beheld innocence, sweet innocence, asleep. Your heart would have yearned, your eyes perhaps overflowed with tears of joy, to see how charming he looked; like a young cherub dropped from heaven, if they be so happy as to have young cherubs there.

"When awaked, it is not to be imagined with what complacency and ease, what soft serenity altogether unmixed with the least cloud, he opened his eyes. Dancing with joy in his nurse's arms, his eyes not only smiled, but laughed, which put me in mind of a certain near relation of his, whom I need not name. What delights thee so, thou lovely babe? art thou thinking of thy mother's recovery? does some kind power impress upon thee a presage of thy future happiness under her tender care?—I took the liberty to touch him with unhallowed lips, which restored me to the

good opinion of the nurse, who had neither forgot nor forgiven my having slighted that favour once."

This letter contained a song, which will be found in the second volume. Another letter is here given at length, from its being the only attempt of a humorous nature in prose which Thomson is known to have made, and the manner in which he satirizes travellers and courtiers is amusing.

To a Friend, on his Travels.

"Trusty and well beloved Dog, Dec. 7, 1742. HEARING you are gone abroad to see the world, as they call it, I cannot forbear, upon this occasion, transmitting you a few thoughts.

"It may seem presumption in me to pretend to give you any instruction; but you must know, that I am a dog of considerable experience. Indeed I have not improved so much as I might have done by my justly deserved misfortunes: the case very often of my betters. However, a little I have learned; and sometimes, while I seemed to lie asleep before the fire, I have overheard the conversation of your travellers. In the first place, I will not suppose that you are gone abroad an illiterate cub, just escaped from the lash of your keeper, and running wild about the world like a dog who has lost his master, utterly unacquainted with the proper knowledge, manners, and conversation of dogs.

"These are the public jests of every country through which they run post, and frequently they are avoided as if they were mad dogs. None will converse with them but those who shear, sometimes even skin them, and often they return home like a dog who has lost his tail. In short, these travelling puppies do nothing else but run after foreign bitches, learn to dance, cut capers, play tricks, and admire your fine outlandish howling; though, in my opinion, our vigorous deep mouthed British note is better music. If a timely stop is not put to this, the genuine breed of our ancient sturdy dogs will by degrees dwindle and degenerate into dull Dutch mastiffs, effeminate Italian lapdogs, or tawdry impertinent French harlequins. All our once noble throated guardians of the house and fold will be succeeded by a mean courtly race, that snarl at honest men, flatter rogues, proudly wear badges of slavery, ribands, collars, &c. and fetch and carry sticks at the lion's court. By the by, my dear Marquis, this fetching and carrying of sticks is a diversion you are too much addicted to, and, though a diversion, unbecoming a true independent country dog. There is another dog vice that greatly prevails among the hungry whelps at court, but you are too well stuffed to fall into that. What I mean is patting, pawing, soliciting, teasing, snapping the morsel out of one another's mouths, being bitterly envious, and insatiably ravenous, nay, sometimes filching when they safely

may. Of this vice I have an instance continually before my eyes, in that wretched animal Scrub, whose genius is quite misplaced here in the country. He has, besides, such an admirable talent at scratching at a door, as might well recommend him to the office of a court waiter. A word in your ear—I wish a certain two-legged friend of mine had a little of his assiduity. These canine courtiers are also extremely given to bark at merit and virtue, if ill clad and poor: they have likewise a nice discernment with regard to those whom their master distinguishes; to such you shall see them go up immediately, and fawning in the most abject manner—*baiser leur cul.* For me, it is always a maxim

> To honour humble worth, and, scorning state,
> P— on the proud inhospitable gate.

For which reason I go scattering my water every where about Richmond. And now that I am upon this topic, I must cite you two lines of a letter from Bounce, of celebrated memory, to Fop, a dog in the country to a dog at court. She is giving an account of her generous offspring, among which she mentions two, far above the vice I now censure:

> One ushers friends to Bathurst's door,
> One fawns at Oxford's on the poor.

Charming dogs! I have little more to say; but only, considering the great mart of scandal you are at, to warn you against flattering those you converse with, and the moment they turn to go

away, backbiting them—a vice with which the dogs of old ladies are much infected; and you must have been most furiously affected with it here at Richmond, had you not happened into a good family; therefore I might have spared this caution. One thing I had almost forgot. You have a base custom, when you chance upon a certain fragrant exuvium, of perfuming your carcass with it. Fie! fie! leave that nasty custom to your little, foppish, crop-eared dogs, who do it to conceal their own stink.

"My letter, I fear, grows tedious. I will detain you from your slumbers no longer, but conclude by wishing that the waters and exercise may bring down your fat sides, and that you may return a genteel accomplished dog. Pray lick for me, you happy dog you, the hands of the fair ladies you have the honour to attend. I remember to have had that happiness once, when one who shall be nameless looked with an envious eye upon me.

"Farewell, my dear Marquis. Return, I beg it of you, soon to Richmond; when I will treat you with some choice fragments, a marrowbone, which I will crack for you myself, and a dessert of high toasted cheese. I am, without further ceremony, yours sincerely, BUFF.

"Mi Dewti too Marki. X Scrub's mark."

In a letter which Thomson wrote Mr. Lyttelton, in July, 1743, he says he was employed in cor-

recting "The Seasons:" at that time, it seems, he had never been at Hagley, his friend's seat, in Worcestershire.

"Dear Sir, London, July 14, 1743.

I HAD the pleasure of yours some posts ago, and have delayed answering it hitherto that I might be able to determine when I could have the happiness of waiting upon you. Hagley is the place in England I most desire to see; I imagine it to be greatly delightful in itself, and I know it to be so to the highest degree by the company it is animated with. Some reasons prevent my waiting upon you immediately, but, if you will be so good as let me know how long you design to stay in the country, nothing shall hinder me from passing three weeks or a month with you before you leave it. As this will fall in Autumn I shall like it the better, for I think that season of the year the most pleasing and the most poetical. The spirits are not then dissipated with the gaiety of Spring, and the glaring light of Summer, but composed into a serious and tempered joy. The year is perfect. In the mean time I will go on with correcting The Seasons, and hope to carry down more than one of them with me. The muses, whom you obligingly say I shall bring along with me, I shall find with you—the muses of the great simple country, not the little, fine-lady muses of Richmond Hill.

"I have lived so long in the noise, or at least

its distant din of the town, that I begin to forget what retirement is: with you I shall enjoy it in its highest elegance, and purest simplicity. The mind will not only be soothed into peace, but enlivened into harmony. My compliments attend all at Hagley, and particularly her who gives it charms to you it never had before.

Believe me to be ever, with the greatest respect,
Most affectionately yours,
JAMES THOMSON."

In 1745 his Tancred and Sigismunda was performed at Drury Lane with considerable applause, and he again found a patron in the Prince of Wales, to whom he says, in the dedication, "Allow me only to wish, that what I have now the honour to offer to your Royal Highness may be judged not unworthy of your protection, at least in the sentiments which it inculcates. A warm and grateful sense of your goodness to me makes me desirous to seize every occasion of declaring in public my profound respect and dutiful attachment."

During the year 1744 Mr. Lyttelton came into office, and the earliest exercise of his patronage was to bestow on Thomson the situation of surveyor general of the Leeward Islands, the duties of which appointment he performed, by deputy, and of which the profits were 300*l.* a year. He was thus placed above want, if he was not ele-

vated to affluence, and this piece of good fortune must have been the more grateful since he was indebted for it to a friendship produced by his own merits.

Much of the Summer of 1745, and the Autumn of 1746, were passed at the Leasowes, with Shenstone; who, after his death, placed the following inscription in Virgil's grove there in commemoration of him.

Celeberrimo Poetæ
JACOBO THOMSON,
Prope fontes ille non fastiditos
G. S.
Sedem hanc ornavit.

" Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
" Nam neque me tantum venientis sibilus austri,
" Nec percussa juvant fluctu tam littora, nec quæ
" Saxosas inter decurrunt flumina valles."*

Thomson once more experienced the uncertainty of patronage by the loss of the pension of

* To the much celebrated Poet,
JAMES THOMSON,
This seat was placed
near his favourite springs
by
W. S.

How shall I thank thy Muse, so form'd to please?
For not the whisperings of the southern breeze,
Nor banks still beaten by the breaking wave,
Nor limpid rills that pebbly vallies lave,
Yield such delight.

100*l.* a year, which the Prince of Wales had granted him. This it would seem, from a passage in a letter to his friend Paterson, in 1748, arose from Mr. Lyttelton, whose influence obtained it for him, having incurred the Prince's displeasure. West and Mallet, both friends of that noble minded individual, and who were similarly favoured with pensions, were deprived of them on the same day and for the same reason.

Whilst at Hagley, Mr. Lyttelton's seat, in October 1747, he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Thomson, and, as it is the last to his family which has been preserved, it will be read with interest. Dr. Johnson received it from Boswell to whom that lady presented it.

Hagley, in Worcestershire,
October the 4th, 1747.

" My Dear Sister,

I THOUGHT you had known me better than to interpret my silence into a decay of affection, especially as your behaviour has always been such as rather to increase than diminish it. Do not imagine, because I am a bad correspondent, that I can ever prove an unkind friend and brother. I must do myself the justice to tell you, that my affections are naturally very fixed and constant; and if I had ever reason of complaint against you, of which, by the by, I have not the least shadow, I am conscious of so many defects in myself, as dispose me to be not a little charitable and forgiving.

" It gives me the truest heartfelt satisfaction to

hear you have a good, kind husband, and are in easy, contented circumstances; but were they otherwise, that would only awaken and heighten my tenderness towards you. As our good and tender-hearted parents did not live to receive any material testimonies of that highest human gratitude I owed them, than which nothing could have given me equal pleasure, the only return I can make them now is, by kindness to those they left behind them. Would to God poor Lizy had lived longer, to have been a farther witness of the truth of what I say; and that I might have had the pleasure of seeing once more a sister, who so truly deserved my esteem and love. But she is happy, while we must toil a little longer here below: let us, however, do it cheerfully and gratefully, supported by the pleasing hope of meeting yet again on a safer shore, where to recollect the storms and difficulties of life will not, perhaps, be inconsistent with that blissful state. "You did right to call your daughter by her name; for you must needs have had a particular tender friendship for one another, endeared as you were by nature, by having passed the affectionate years of your youth together, and by that great softener and engager of hearts, mutual hardship. That it was in my power to ease it a little, I account one of the most exquisite pleasures of my life. But enough of this melancholy though not unpleasing strain.

"I esteem you for your sensible and disinterested advice to Mr. Bell, as you will see by

my letter to him; as I approve, entirely, of his marrying again, you may readily ask me why I do not marry at all. My circumstances have hitherto been so variable and uncertain in this fluctuating world, as induce to keep me from engaging in such a state; and now, though they are more settled, and of late, which you will be glad to hear, considerably improved, I begin to think myself too far advanced in life for such youthful undertakings, not to mention some other petty reasons that are apt to startle the delicacy of difficult old bachelors. I am, however, not a little suspicious, that was I to pay a visit to Scotland, of which I have some thoughts of doing soon, I might possibly be tempted to think of a thing not easily repaired if done amiss. I have always been of opinion, that none make better wives than the ladies of Scotland; and yet, who more forsaken than they, while the gentlemen are continually running abroad all the world over? Some of them, it is true, are wise enough to return for a wife. You see I am beginning to make interest already with the Scotch ladies. But no more of this infectious subject. Pray let me hear from you now and then; and though I am not a regular correspondent, yet, perhaps, I may mend in that respect. Remember me kindly to your husband, and believe me to be

Your most affectionate brother,

JAMES THOMSON.

To Mrs. Thomson in Lanark.

It was during this visit to Hagley that he was met by Shenstone, who says, in a letter dated 20th September, 1747:

"As I was returning from church, on Sunday last, whom should I meet in a chaise, with two horses lengthways, but that right friendly bard, Mr. Thomson? I complimented him upon his arrival in this country, and asked him to accompany Mr. Lyttelton to the Leasowes, which he said he would with abundance of pleasure, and so we parted."

The Castle of Indolence and Coriolanus next occupied his attention, and the former, which had been in progress for nearly fifteen years, and was originally intended to consist of a few stanzas ridiculing the want of energy in himself and some of his friends, appeared in about May, 1748, and was the last production of his pen which he lived to print. The sketch of himself is extremely interesting; though he says all, excepting the first line, was written by a friend, who is asserted to have been Lord Lyttelton.

"A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems;
Who, void of envy, guile, and lust of gain,
On virtue still, and Nature's pleasing themes,
Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain;
The world forsaking with a calm disdain,
Here laugh'd he careless in his easy seat;
Here quaff'd encircled with the joyous train,
Oft moralizing sage: his ditty sweet
He loated much to write, ne cared to repeat."

Of the other portraits a few only have been identified. The sixty-sixth stanza alludes to Lord Lyttelton; the sixty-seventh to Mr. Quin; the sixty-ninth has been supposed to describe Dr. Ayscough, his lordship's brother-in-law, but it was clearly a picture of Dr. Murdoch, as he applies nearly the same words to him, in a letter printed in this memoir. Another was, he says, intended for his friend, Mr. Paterson, his deputy in the office of Surveyor General of the Leeward Islands.

The following letter is without a date, but from his stating that the Castle of Indolence would be published in a fortnight, it must have been written about April, 1748.

" Dear Paterson,

" In the first place, and previous to my letter, I must recommend to your favour and protection Mr. James Smith, searcher in St. Christopher's: and I beg of you, as occasion shall serve, and as you find he merits it, to advance him in the business of the customs. He is warmly recommended to me by Sargent, who, in verity, turns out one of the best men of our youthful acquaintance,—honest, honourable, friendly, and generous. If we are not to oblige one another, life becomes a paltry, selfish affair,—a pitiful morsel in a corner. Sargent is so happily married, that I could almost say,—the same case happen to us all.

"That I have not answered several letters of yours, is not owing to the want of friendship and the sincerest regard for you; but you know me well enough to account for my silence, without my saying any more upon that head; besides, I have very little to say that is worthy to be transmitted over the great ocean. The world either futilises so much, or we grow so dead to it, that its transactions make but feeble impressions on us. Retirement and nature are more and more my passion every day; and now, even now, the charming time comes on: Heaven is just on the point, or rather in the very act, of giving earth a green gown. The voice of the nightingale is heard in our lane.

"You must know that I have enlarged my rural domain much to the same dimensions you have done yours. The two fields next to me, from the first of which I have walled—no, no—paled in about as much as my garden consisted of before, so that the walk runs round the hedge, where you may figure me walking any time of the day, and sometimes in the night. I imagine you reclining under cedars, and there enjoying more magnificent slumbers than are known to the pale climates of the north; slumbers rendered awful and divine by the solemn stillness and deep fervours of the torrid noon. At other times I image you drinking punch in groves of lime or orange trees, gathering pineapples from hedges, as commonly as we may blackberries, poetising

under lofty laurels, or making love under full spread myrtles. But, to lower my style a little, as I am such a genuine lover of gardening, why do not you remember me in that instance, and send me some seeds of things that might succeed here during the summer, though they cannot perfect their seed sufficiently in this, to them, uncongenial climate to propagate? in which case is the caliloo, which, from the seed it bore here, came up puny, rickety, and good for nothing. There are other things certainly with you, not yet brought over hither, that might flourish here in the summer time, and live tolerably well, provided they be sheltered in a hospitable stove, or green-house, during the winter. You will give me no small pleasure by sending me, from time to time, some of these seeds, if it were no more but to amuse me in making the trial. With regard to the brother gardeners, you ought to know that, as they are half vegetables, the animal part of them will never have spirit enough to consent to the transplanting of the vegetables into distant, dangerous climates. They, happily for themselves, have no other idea but to dig on here, eat, drink, sleep, and kiss their wives.

"As to more important business, I have nothing to write to you. You know best. Be, as you always must be, just and honest; but if you are unhappily, romantic, you shall come home without money, and write a tragedy on yourself.

Mr. Lyttelton told me that the Grenvilles and he had strongly recommended the person the governor and you proposed for that considerable office, lately fallen vacant in your department, and that there was good hopes of succeeding. He told me also that Mr. Pitt had said that it was not to be expected that offices such as that is, for which the greatest interest is made here at home, could be accorded to your recommendation, but that as to the middling or inferior offices, if there was not some particular reason to the contrary, regard would be had thereto. This is all that can be reasonably desired; and if you are not infected with a certain Creolian distemper, whereof I am persuaded your soul will utterly resist the contagion, as I hope your body will that of the natural ones, there are few men so capable of that unperishable happiness, that peace and satisfaction of mind, at least, that proceeds from being reasonable and moderate in our desires, as you. These are the treasures dug from an inexhaustible mine in our own breasts, which, like those in the kingdom of heaven, the rust of time cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. I must learn to work this mine a little more, being struck off from a certain hundred pounds a year which you know I had. West, Mallet, and I, were all routed in one day; if you would know why—out of resentment to our friend in Argyll Street. Yet I have hopes given

me of having it restored with interest some time or other. Oh, that some time or other is a great deceiver.

"Coriolanus has not yet appeared on the stage, from the little, dirty jealousy of Tullus* towards him who alone can act Coriolanus.† Indeed, the first has entirely jockeyed the last off the stage, for this season, like a giant in his wrath. Let us have a little more patience, Paterson; nay, let us be cheerful; at last all will be well, at least all will be over,—here I mean: God forbid it should be so hereafter! But, as sure as there is a God, that will not be so.

"Now that I am prating of myself, know that, after fourteen or fifteen years, the Castle of Indolence comes abroad in a fortnight. It will certainly travel as far as Barbadoes. You have an apartment in it as a night pensioner; which, you may remember, I filled up for you during our delightful party at North End. Will ever these days return again? Do not you remember eating the raw fish that were never caught? All our friends are pretty much in statu quo, except it be poor Mr. Lyttelton. He has had the severest trial a human tender heart can have;‡ but the old physician, time, will at last close up his wounds, though there must always remain an inward smarting. Mitchell§ is in the house for

* Garrick. † Quin.

‡ Mrs. Lyttelton died on the 19th of January, 1746-7.

§ Afterwards Envoy to Berlin and a Knight of the Bath.

Aberdeenshire, and has spoke modestly well; I hope he will be something else soon; none deserves better: true friendship and humanity dwell in his heart. Gray is working hard to pass his accounts; I spoke to him about that affair. If he gave you any trouble about it, even that of dunning, I shall think strangely, but I dare say he is too friendly to his old friends, and you are among the oldest.

"Symmer is at last tired of gaiety, and is going to take semi-country house at Hammersmith. I am sorry that honest, sensible Warrender, who is in town, seems to be stunted in church preferments. He ought to be a tall cedar in the house of the Lord. If he is not so at last it will add more fuel to my indignation, that burns already too intensely, and throbs towards an eruption. Patrick Murdoch is in town, tutor to Admiral Vernon's son, and is in good hope of another living in Suffolk, that country of tranquillity, where he will then burrow himself in a wife and be happy. Good-natured, obliging Miller, is as usual. Though the Doctor* increases in business he does not decrease in spleen, that is both humane and agreeable, like Jacques in the play; I sometimes, too, have a touch of it.

"But I must break off this chat with you about your friends, which, were I to indulge in, would be endless. As for politics, we are, I believe, on

* Dr. Armstrong.

the brink of a peace. The French are vapouring at present in the seige of Maestricht, at the same time they are mortally sick in their marine, and through all the vitals of France. It is a pity we cannot continue the war a little longer, and put their agonizing trade quite to death. This siege, I take it, they mean as their last flourish in the war.'

"May your health, which never failed you yet, still continue, till you have scraped together enough to return home and live in some snug corner, as happy as the corycium senex, in Virgil's fourth Georgic, whom I recommend both to you and myself as a perfect model of the honest happy life.

Believe me to be ever,
Most sincerely and affectionately yours,
JAMES THOMSON."

This communication discloses the reason of "Coriolanus" being delayed, and the same or some other cause continuing to prevent its appearance, its author was destined never to witness its reception.

It was Thomson's habit to walk from his residence in Kew Lane, near Richmond, whenever the weather rendered going by water ineligible. In one of these journeys from London, he found himself, on reaching Hammersmith, tired and overheated, and he imprudently took a boat to

convey him to Kew. The walk from the landing place to his house did not remove the chill which the air on the water produced, and the next day he found himself in a high fever, a state which his plethoric habit rendered alarming. His disorder yielded, however, to care and medicine, and he was soon out of danger; but being tempted by a fine evening to expose himself to the dew before he was perfectly restored, a relapse took place, and he was speedily beyond the powers of human aid. The moment his situation became known in town, his friends, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Reid, and Dr. Armstrong hastened to him at midnight; but their presence availed nothing, and they had only the melancholy satisfaction of witnessing his last moments. He expired on the 27th of August, 1748, having within a few days completed his forty-eighth year. Of his death-bed no particulars are recorded. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Lyttelton charged themselves with the care of his effects; and on the 25th of October, 1748, letters of administration were granted to them as attorneys of Mary Craig, of Edinburgh, formerly Thomson, wife of William Craig, his sister, and next of kin, for her use.

It was the next object of these generous friends to bring Thomson's posthumous tragedy before the public, and in 1749, "Coriolanus" was acted for the benefit of his relations. The Prologue, which was written by Mr. Lyttelton, and was

spoken by Quin, is peculiarly entitled to notice from the affecting manner in which the writer speaks of the author:

" I come not here your candour to implore
For scenes, whose author is, alas! no more;
He wants no advocate his cause to plead;
You will yourselves be patrons of the dead.
No party his benevolence confined,
No sect—alike it flow'd to all mankind.
He loved his friends, forgive this gushing tear:
Alas! I feel I am no actor here,
He loved his friends with such a warmth of heart,
So clear of interest, so devoid of art,
Such generous friendship, such unshaken zeal,
No words can speak it, but our tears may tell.
Oh candid truth, O faith without a stain,
Oh manners gently firm, and nobly plain,
Oh sympathizing love of others' bliss,
Where will you find another breast like his?
Such was the Man—the Poet well you know:
Oft has he touch'd your hearts with tender woe:
Oft in this crowded house, with just applause
You heard him teach fair Virtue's purest laws;
For his chaste Muse employ'd her heaven-taught lyre
None but the noblest passions to inspire,
Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
One line, which dying he could wish to blot.
Oh, may to-night your favourable doom
Another laurel add to grace his tomb:
Whilst he, superior now to praise or blame,
Hears not the feeble voice of human fame.
Yet if to those, whom most on earth he loved,
From whom his pious care is now removed,
With whom his liberal hand, and bounteous heart,
Shared all his little fortune could impart;

If to those friends your kind regard shall give
What they no longer can from his receive,
That, that, even now, above yon starry pole,
May touch with pleasure his immortal soul."

Truly was the speaker made to say he was no actor on that occasion, and the feeling which he evinced, in reciting these verses, gave increased effect to their touching eloquence.

Within a few months of his death, his old patroness, the Countess of Hertford, stated in a letter to Lady Luxborough, that Shenstone had shown her his Poem on Autumn, and the honour he had done Thomson's memory in it; adding that he told her he purposed erecting an urn to him in Virgil's Grove. In a letter to Shenstone in November, 1753, that lady, then Duchess of Somerset, requested him to allow Dodsley to add to his collection his poem called "Damon's Bower," addressed to William Lyttelton, Esq. and offered to lend him a copy in case he had lost the original. These passages prove her grace's respect for his memory, and render Johnson's remark, that he had displeased her, unlikely. Shenstone speaks feelingly of Thomson's death in a letter written on the 3rd of September following:

"Poor Mr. Thomson, Mr. Pitt tells me, is dead. He was to have been at Hagley this week, and then I should probably have seen him here. As it is I will erect an urn in Virgil's Grove to his memory. I was really as much

shocked to hear of his death, as if I had known and loved him for a number of years. God knows I lean on a very few friends, and if they drop me, I become a wretched misanthrope."

The author of The Seasons is thus alluded to in the poem mentioned by the Duchess of Somerset:

"Though Thomson, sweet descriptive bard!
Inspiring Autumn sung;
Yet how should we the months regard
That stopp'd his flowing tongue?

"Ah! luckless months, of all the rest,
To whose hard share it fell!
For sure he was the gentlest breast
That ever sung so well.

"He! he is gone, whose moral strain
Could wit and mirth refine;
He! he is gone, whose social vein
Surpass'd the power of wine.

"Fast by the streams he deign'd to praise
In yon sequester'd grove,
To him a votive urn I raise,
To him and friendly Love.

"Yes, there, my Friend! forlorn and sad,
I grave your Thomson's name,
And there his lyre, which Fate forbade
To sound your growing fame.

"There shall my plaintive song recount
Dark themes of hopeless woe,
And faster than the dropping fount
I'll teach mine eyes to flow.

"There leaves, in spite of Autumn green,
Shall shade the hallow'd ground,
And Spring will there again be seen
To call forth flowers around.

> " But no kind suns will bid me share,
> Once more, his social hour;
> Ah! Spring! thou never canst repair
> This loss to Damon's bower."

Thomson's funeral was attended by Quin, Mallet, Mr. Robertson, the brother-in-law of his Amanda, and another friend, probably either Mr. Lyttelton or Mr. Mitchell. He was buried in Richmond Church, under a plain stone without any inscription, and his works formed the only monument to his memory until the erection of the one in Westminster Abbey, which was opened to public view on the 10th of May, 1762, the expense of which was defrayed by an edition of his works printed in that year in two quarto volumes, and published by subscription. It is situated between those of Shakespeare and Rowe, and presents a figure of Thomson sitting, leaning his left arm upon a pedestal, and holding a book with the cap of liberty in his right hand. Upon the pedestal is carved a bas-relief of " The Seasons," to which a boy points, offering him a laurel crown as the reward of his genius. At the feet of the figure is a magic mask and ancient harp. The whole is supported by a projecting pedestal; and on a pannel is inscribed his name, age, and the date of his death, with the lines which are inserted at the commencement of this Memoir, taken from his Summer. The monument was designed by Adam, and executed by Michael Henry Spang.

Lord Buchan afterwards placed a small brass tablet in Richmond Church with the following inscription:

In the earth, below this tablet,
are the remains of
JAMES THOMSON,
author of the beautiful poems, entituled,
"The Seasons," the "Castle of Indolence," &c.
who died at Richmond
on the 27th of August,
and was buried
on the 29th O. S. 1748.
The Earl of Buchan,
unwilling that
so good a man, and sweet a poet,
should be without a memorial,
has denoted the place of his interment,
for the satisfaction of his admirers,
in the year of our Lord,
M.DCC.XCII.

Beneath this inscription, his lordship added this beautiful passage from Winter,

"Father of Light and Life! thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good! teach me thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit! and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never fading bliss!"

By the sale of an edition of his works, undertaken for the purpose of aiding his relations, and the profits of his last Tragedy, a sufficient sum

was raised to liquidate all his debts and to leave a handsome residue.*

In the whole range of British poetry Thomson's "Seasons" are, perhaps, the earliest read, and most generally admired; hence it is not necessary to say much on the peculiar character of a genius so well known and so often discussed. He was the Poet of Nature, and his chief merit consisted in describing her, and the pleasure afforded

* A correspondent in the European Magazine, for 1819, has afforded very satisfactory information about the sums which Thomson obtained for several of his works, and of the dates of the agreements respecting them, derived from an appeal against a decision of the Court of Chancery, many years since, on a question of literary property.

It appears Thomson sold Sophonisba, a Tragedy, and Spring, a Poem, to Andrew Millar, 16th January, 1729, for 137*l.* 10*s.* On the 28th of July, in the same year, he sold to John Millan, "Summer," "Winter," "Autumn," "Britannia," Poem to Newton, the Hymn, and an Essay on Descriptive Poetry, for 105*l.* On the 16th of June, 1738, Andrew Millar purchased these Poems of John Millan at the original price. On the 13th of June, 1769, Andrew Millar's executors sold the copyright of the whole by Auction to fifteen London booksellers, for the sum of 505*l.* Soon after Davis, the Bookseller, sold half his twelfth, for the shares were unequal, to Becket and Dehondt, not of the original list of purchasers, for 21*l.* being the price he had paid for that proportion.

It is a curious fact that this was a close sale; and Alexander Donaldson, the Edinburgh Bookseller, who wished to attend was not admitted. He then published a copy of "The Seasons" at Edinburgh, stated in the title to be printed in

by a contemplation of her infinite and glorious varieties. Studying her deeply, his mind acquired that placidity of thought and feeling which an abstraction from public life is sure to generate. She was to him, as he has himself said, a source of happiness of which fortune could not deprive him;—

> "I care not, fortune, what you me deny;
> You cannot rob me of free nature's grace;
> You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
> Through which Aurora shows her brightening face;
> You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
> The woods and lawns, by living stream at eve:
> Let health my nerves, and finer fibres leave;
> Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave."

His pictures of scenery and of rural life are the productions of a master, and render him the Claude of poets. The Seasons are the first book from which we are taught to worship the goddess to whose service the bard of Ednam devoted himself; and who is there that has reflected on

1768, the sale of which was said, however, to have begun before the auction of the copyright took place.

A singular anecdote was related in the Edinburgh Star, dated from Logan House, G. D. October, 1821, and signed "An Old Shepherd," which tends to fix the authorship of "The Gentle Shepherd," attributed to Allan Ramsay on Thomson. To what degree of credit it is entitled is left to the reader to determine. The following is the statement on the subject which was copied into the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xci. part ii. p. 351.

"About thirty years ago, there was a respectable old man, of the name of John Steel, who was well acquainted with

the magnificence of an extended landscape, viewed the sun as he emerges from the horizon, or witnessed the setting of that glorious orb when he leaves the world to reflection and repose, and does not feel his descriptions rush upon the mind, and heighten his enjoyment?

It has been said that the style of that work is pompous, and that it contains many faults. The remark is partially true. His style is, in some places, monotonous, from its unvaried elevation; but to him Nature was a subject of the profoundest reverence, and he, doubtless, considered that she ought to be spoken of with solemnity; though it is evident from one of his verses, which is often cited, that he was aware simplicity is the most becoming garb of majesty and beauty. Another objection to The Seasons is, that they contain frequent digressions, and, notwithstanding that it is made by an authority, from which it may be presumptuous to dissent, the justice of the observation cannot, perhaps, be established.

Allan Ramsay; and he told John Steel himself, that when Mr. Thomson, the author of "The Seasons," was in his shop at Edinburgh, getting himself shaven, Ramsay was repeating some of his poems. Mr. Thomson says to him, 'I have something to emit to the world, but I do not wish to father it.' Ramsay asked what he would give him, and he would father it. Mr. Thomson replied, all the profit that arose from the publication. 'A bargain be it,' said Ramsay. Mr. Thomson delivered him the manuscript. So, from what is said above, Mr. Thomson, the author of 'The Seasons,' is the author of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' and Allan Ramsay is the father of it. This, I believe, is the truth."

Every one who has read them will admit that the History of Caledon and Amelia, and of Lavinia, for example, have afforded as much pleasure as any other parts, and a poem descriptive of scenery, storms, and sunshine, requires the introduction of human beings to give it life and animation. A painter is not censured for adding figures to a landscape, and he is only required to render them graceful, and to make them harmonize with his subject. The characters in The Seasons are all in keeping: a gleaner is as necessary to a harvest field as a lover to a romance; and it seems hypercritical to say that there should be nothing of interest in the lives of the inhabitants of the villages or hamlets which are alluded to.

Another test of the soundness of this criticism is, to inquire, whether that work does not owe its chief popularity to those very digressions. Few persons will read a volume, however beautiful the descriptions which it contains, unless they are relieved by incidents of human life; and, if it were possible to strip The Seasons of every passage not strictly relevant, they would lose their chief attractions, and soon be thrown aside.

One charm of poetry is, that it often presents a vivid picture of the idiosyncrasy of an author's mind, and this is most conspicuous in the episodes to the immediate subject of his labours. The chain of thought which led him astray may not unfrequently be discovered, and it is on such oc-

casions, chiefly, that those splendid emanations which become aphorisms to future ages are produced. Genius seems then to cast aside all the fetters which art imposes, and individual feeling usurping for the moment entire dominion, the mistress who has cheered his hopes, or the coquette who has abandoned him, his friend, or his enemy, as either may occur to his imagination, is sure to be commemorated in words glowing with the fervour of inspiration. Whilst he pursues the thread of his tale, we are reminded of the Poet alone, and though we may admire his skill, it is only when he breaks upon us in some spontaneous burst of passion that we sympathise with the man, and are excited to kindred enthusiasm.

To the power of painting scenery, and delineating the softer and more pleasing traits of character, Thomson's genius seems to have been confined. Truly has he said of himself,

> " I solitary court
> The inspiring breeze, and meditate the book
> Of Nature, ever open ; aiming thence,
> Warm from the heart, to pour the moral song ;"

but he was incapable of describing the heart when assailed by boisterous passions, and his representations of ambition, patriotism, or revenge, are comparatively feeble. His tragedies, though not without merit as compositions, are declamatory,

cold, and vapid. His heroes and heroines relate their woes in good verse, but we remain unmoved, and follow them to their fate with the indifference of stoics. No man was animated by a stronger or more disinterested love of public freedom than Thomson, and he every where inculcates patriotic sentiments; but his "Liberty" neither stimulates our patriotism, nor increases our veneration for his idol. No writer has said more on these subjects, and when he lived, it was the fashion to pretend to be actuated by noble and generous motives, but it may be doubted if any poet ever produced them less in his own time; and the idea that he, or any one else, could excite them now is ridiculous. "Liberty" is, therefore, read only because it is one of his works, and it is not likely that it will ever become popular.

The "Castle of Indolence" displays greater poetical invention than any other of his pieces; and, little as allegory is suited to the existing taste, it must still be read with pleasure. Of his Odes and minor articles there is little that need be said; and part of them have already been sufficiently noticed. His Hymn is destined to be as permanent a favourite as The Seasons, to which, indeed, it is an appropriate conclusion, and, like every other production of its author, it displays the highest veneration for the Deity.

Thomson's only prose work is an Essay on

Descriptive Poetry, which was advertised as a separate production, in 1730, but which formed the Preface to the second edition of "Winter," and in this edition it is prefixed to The Seasons. That Essay is remarkable, not so much for ingenuity or original conceptions as for the arguments used to show that poetry ought to be devoted to loftier subjects than those on which many had exercised their talents. It was his especial merit that he founded a new school in his art, and disdaining to follow in the path which conducted most of his contemporaries to fame, he, with the daring of genius, struck out a course for himself.

It must be evident, from the letters in this memoir, that Thomson did not excel in correspondence; and his dislike to writing letters, which was very great, may have been either the cause or effect of his being inferior in this respect to other poets of the last century.

Thomson's character was in every respect consistent with what his writings lead us to expect. He was high-minded, amiable, generous, and humane. Equable in his temper, and affable in his deportment, he was rarely ruffled but by the knowledge of some act of cruelty or injustice; and as he magnanimously forgave the petty assaults which envy or malignity levelled at him, and stood aloof from the poetical warfare which raged with great heat during some part of his career, he was soon, as if by common consent, respected

by all the belligerents. His society was select and distinguished. Pope, Hill, Dr. Armstrong, the Bishop of Derry, Mr. afterwards Sir Andrew Mitchell, Mendez, Dr. De la Cour, Mallet, Hammond whom he eulogises in "The Seasons," Quin, and above all Mr. Lyttelton, were his most intimate friends. With Pope he lived on terms of great friendship; and, according to Dr. Johnson, he displayed his regard in a poetical epistle addressed to Thomson, whilst he was in Italy in 1731, but of which Pope "abated the value by transplanting some of the lines into his Epistle to Arbuthnot." Mr. Robertson stated, in reply to Mr. Park's question,* whether Pope did not often visit Thomson, "Yes, frequently. Pope has sometimes said, 'Thomson, I'll walk to the end of your garden, and then set off to the bottom of Kew Foot Lane, and back.' Pope courted Thomson, and Thomson was always admitted to Pope, whether he had company or not."

Next to Poetry he was fond of Civil and Natural History, Voyages and Travels, and in his leisure hours he found amusement in gardening. Of the fine arts, music was his chief delight; but he was an admirer of painting and sculpture, and

* In October, 1791, Thomas Park, Esq. the poet, called on Mr. Robertson, who was surgeon to the Royal Household at Kew, the intimate friend of Thomson, with the view of gaining information about him. He committed to paper all he gleaned, and it has since been printed.

formed a valuable collection of prints and drawings from the antique.

The besetting sin of Thomson's character was indolence, and of this he was himself fully aware, as he alludes to the failing in himself and some of his friends, in the "Castle of Indolence." He seldom rose before noon, and his time for composition was generally about midnight. His manners are sometimes represented as having been coarse; but his zealous defender, Lord Buchan, asserts, on the contrary, that Lord Chatham, Lord Temple, Lord Lyttelton, Sir Andrew Mitchel, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Murdoch, agreed in declaring that he was "a gentleman at all points." His intimate friend, Mr. Robertson, told Mr. Park, that "Thomson was neither a petit maître nor a boor; he had simplicity without rudeness, and a cultivated manner without being courtly;" and this may, perhaps, be considered the most accurate definition of his deportment.

Much light is often thrown on a man's character by authenticated anecdotes. Of Thomson, however, very few are remembered, and the following are introduced because his previous biographers have thought them worthy of notice, rather than from any particular claims which they possess to attention.

It is said that he was so careless about money, that once, when paying a brewer he gave him two bank notes rolled together instead of one,

and, when told of his mistake, he appeared perfectly indifferent, saying, "he had enough to go on without it." On one occasion he was robbed of his watch between London and Richmond, and when Mr. Robertson expressed regret for his loss, he replied, "Pshaw, I am glad they took it from me, it was never good for any thing." Having invited some friends to dinner, one of them informed him that there was a general stipulation there should be no hard drinking; Thomson acquiesced, only requiring that each man should drink his bottle. The terms were accepted unconditionally, and, when the cloth was removed, a three quart bottle was set before each of his guests.

In person Thomson was rather stout and above the middle size; his countenance was not remarkable for expression, though, in his youth, he was considered handsome, but in conversation his face became animated and his eye fiery and intellectual. Silent in mixed company, his wit and vivacity seemed reserved for his friends, and in their society he was communicative, playful, and entertaining. Few men possessed in a greater degree the art of creating firm and affectionate friendships. Those with whom he became acquainted at the commencement of his career loved him till its close, and the individuals who had given to his life its sweetest enjoyments watched over his death-bed, and became the

guardians of his fame, by superintending the only monuments of which genius ought to be ambitious, a complete edition of his works, and a tablet in Westminster Abbey.

It has been remarked that the poets of the day did not commemorate Thomson's genius by exerting their own in honour of his memory; and an epigram appeared in consequence. There is not, however, much justice in the remark. Not only did Collins, Shenstone, Lyttelton, Mendez, and others, sing his praises in most appropriate strains, but immediately after his decease, "Musidorus, a poem sacred to his memory," appeared; and since that time Burns, Pye, the Honourable Mrs. Boscawen, &c. have imitated their example. That lady became possessed of his house near Richmond, and evinced her respect for the Poet, by preserving every memorial of him which could be found.

In a retired part of the gardens she replaced the little rural seat so much the favourite of Thomson, and hung votive tablets or inscriptions round it, in honour of her admired poet, whose bust on a pediment of the seat on entering it, had the following sentence:

> "Here Thomson sung
> The Seasons, and their change."

Within the alcove Mrs. Boscawen placed the little antique table, on which it is said the Poet

penned many of his lines. The inside was further adorned with well adapted citations from other writers, who have eulogized his talents; and in the centre, was the following inscription:

Within this pleasing retirement,
allured by the music of the nightingale,
which warbled in soft unison
to the melody of his soul,
in unaffected cheerfulness,
and genial, though simple elegance,
lived
JAMES THOMSON!
Sensibly alive to all the beauties of nature,
he painted their images as they rose in review;
and poured the whole profusion of them
into his inimitable
SEASONS!
Warmed with intense devotion
to the Sovereign of the Universe,
its flame glowed through all his compositions.
Animated with unbounded benevolence,
with the tenderest social sympathy,
he never gave one moment's pain
to any of his fellow creatures;
save, only, by his death,
which happened at this place,
on the
27th day of August, 1748.

Thomson was never married, and in his letter to his sister, in 1747, he says he was too poor to form a domestic establishment. The only woman to whom he was known to be attached, was Miss Young, daughter of Captain Gilbert Young, of

the family of that name, in Gulyhill, in Dumfriesshire. She was a very fine young woman of superior endowments, and married Admiral Campbell. Her lover has celebrated her in several poems by the name of "Amanda," and so deep was his passion, that his friend, Mr. Robertson, who married her sister, considers that his disappointment in obtaining her rendered him indifferent to life. One, if not the only impediment to their union, was his straitened circumstances.

Thomson was, as has been before stated, one of nine children. His only brother John came to London and acted as his amanuensis, but being attacked by consumption, he returned to Scotland, and died young. Of his sisters, only three are known to have married. Jean, the eldest, was the wife of Mr. Robert Thomson, Master of the Grammar School at Lanark, with whom Boswell says, in July, 1777, he had placed two of his nephews. She was then an old woman, but having retained her memory, gave that writer many particulars of the Poet, together with the letter which Johnson has printed. Her son Robert who was a student of medicine in Edinburgh, died in his father's lifetime at Lanark; and of her daughters, Elizabeth was born before 1747, and Beatrix married Mr. Thomas Prentice of Jerviswood.

Elizabeth, his second sister, was the wife of the Rev. Robert Bell, Minister of Strathaven in Clydesdale, and died sometime before 1747. His

reply to Mr. Bell's request that he would consent to her nuptials was addressed to her:

" My Dear Sister,

I RECEIVED a letter from Mr. Robert Bell, Minister of Strathaven, in which he asks my consent to his marriage with you. Mr. Gusthart acquainted me with this some time ago; to whose letter I have returned an answer, which he tells me he has showed you both. I entirely agree to this marriage, as I find it to be a marriage of inclination, and founded upon long acquaintance and mutual esteem. Your behaviour hitherto has been such as gives me very great satisfaction, in the small assistance I have been able to afford you. Now you are going to enter upon a new state of life, charged with higher cares and duties, I need not advise you how to behave in it, since you are so near Mr. Gusthart, who, by his good council and friendly assistance, has been so kind to you all along; only I must chiefly recommend to you to cultivate, by every method, that union of hearts, that agreement and sympathy of tempers, in which consists the true happiness of the marriage state. The economy and gentle management of a family is a woman's natural province, and from that her best praise arises. You will apply yourself thereto as it becomes a good and virtuous wife. I dare say I need not put you in mind of having a just and grateful sense of, and future confidence in, the goodness of God, who

has been to you a 'Father to the fatherless.' Though you will hereafter be more immediately under the protection of another, yet you may always depend upon the sincere friendship, and tenderest good offices of your most affectionate brother,

JAMES THOMSON."

"By last post I wrote to Jeany about the affairs she mentioned to me. Remember me kindly to all friends."

Mrs. Bell had two sons, Dr. James Bell, Minister of Coldstream, who published a volume of Sermons, and Thomas Bell, who died a Merchant at Jamaica.

Mary, the poet's youngest sister, married Mr. William Craig, Merchant of Edinburgh, and died on the 11th of September, 1790, the day on which Lord Buchan celebrated the anniversary of the poet's birth. She had only one son, James, an ingenious architect, who planned the new Town of Edinburgh, and died in that city on the 23rd of June, 1795. He intended to erect a pillar to his uncle in the village of Ednam, and wished Dr. Beattie to write an appropriate inscription. The intention was not carried into execution, but Beattie's sensible letter in reply to the request, in which he ridicules inscriptions in Latin to an English poet, and states what ought to be said on these occasions, might have been read with advantage by those who superintended

Burns' monument. Lord Buchan's exuberant zeal, in honour of Thomson, in crowning his bust, and other fooleries, approaches so nearly to the ridiculous, that his motive scarcely secures him from being laughed at. The annual commemoration of the poet's birth is in better taste; and proves the generous pride with which

> " ——— Scotia, with exulting tear,
> Proclaims that Thomson was her son."

Lord Lyttelton has justly said of Thomson's writings, that they contain

> " No line which dying he could wish to blot;"

and, considering the taste of the age in which he lived, this praise is perhaps the highest which could be pronounced. With a slight alteration the same eulogy may be passed on his whole life; for it was free from a single act which could create remorse. To his relations he was liberal and affectionate; to his friends faithful and devoted: viewing all mankind with beneficence and love, he performed with exemplary but unostentatious piety that first of Christian virtues, to teach the world to reverence the Creator in his works, and to learn from them veneration for his wisdom and confidence in his mercy. Thus the character of Thomson, both as a writer and a man, seems almost perfect; and whilst the admirer of his genius may point to his poems as some of the

most splendid emanations of human intellect, those who deem it more important to inquire how talents are applied than to boast of their extent, may proudly adduce him as a rare example of the application of a mind of the highest capacity to the improvement of the taste and morals of society. His poems may be placed in the hands of our wives and our daughters even in the present age, when our ears are more delicate than our consciences, without first subjecting them to the ordeal of a modern expurgator. Of his productions no "Family Editions," which mar, if they do not destroy, the natural vigour of a writer, are necessary. By confining himself to the strict rules of propriety, he has placed his fame beyond the power of those relentless censors who have emasculated Shakespeare, our national bard, and Gibbon, our most eloquent historian. Secure from the revolutions of taste or time, Thomson's labours are destined to descend with undiminished admiration to the latest posterity; and it may be predicted with confidence, that future generations, like the last and the present, will have their reverence for the God of Nature excited, and their earliest attachment to Nature herself strengthened, by the Poet who has sung her in all her "Seasons."

ADDENDA TO THE MEMOIR OF THOMSON.

SINCE the Life of Thomson was printed the author has been favoured with some of the Poet's letters, and other materials, by Mr. David Laing, of Edinburgh, who, to a laudable zeal in collecting information about the history and literature of his country, unites the greatest liberality, by placing the result of his researches at the disposition of his friends.

The Reverend Thomas Thomson, the Poet's father, was licensed to preach on the 17th June, 1691; was ordained minister of Ednam, 12th July, 1692; and was removed to Sudden, or Southdean, about the year 1701, which accounts for his son's being sent to school at Jedburgh. The exact time of his death has not been ascertained, but it must have been about 1720.*

The Poet was entered a student of the University of Edinburgh in 1719, but his attendance, as was often the case, seems to have been irre-

* Notices of the Rev. Thomas Thomson occur in "Kirkwood's Plea before the Kirk." 4to. London. 1698.

gular; for the only subsequent notice of him is on the 27th October, 1724, when he performed a prescribed exercise, being a Lecture on the tenth section of the 119th Psalm. It is said by all his biographers, that this exercise was a poetical paraphrase of the 104th Psalm;* that the powers of imagination which it displayed, though complimented by the divinity professor, were considered unsuited to the sacred office for which he was designed; that he consequently abandoned his intention of entering the ministry; and, from the approbation which Mr. Auditor Benson expressed of the piece, his thoughts were directed to London.

This story, though not without some foundation, inasmuch as he wrote a paraphrase of the Psalm in question, is disproved by incontrovertible facts. No paraphrase in verse of a Psalm could possibly have been admitted as an exercise at the University; and the subject referred to was a prose lecture, or dissertation, on part of the 119th Psalm; but as it may have been written in too flowery a style, and been too redundant in poetical imagery, the censure said to have been pronounced by the divinity professor possibly occurred. That this circumstance did not alter his views with respect to the church is evident from his saying, in some letters from London, that he still intended to get ordained. It does not appear, from the registers

* See p. x. and xi. of the Memoir.

of the University, that he ever took his Master of Arts' degree, but he certainly added the distinction to his name in the first edition of "Winter," and the omission of it afterwards probably arose from his calling himself, in the title pages of his works, Mr. Thomson. Among his contemporaries at the University, where their friendship commenced, were David Malloch, or Mallet, who contributed several pieces to the "Edinburgh Miscellany," and Patrick Murdoch, his subsequent biographer; but his earliest, and one of the warmest of his friends, was Dr. Cranston, to whom all the following letters, as well as some of those which are introduced into the Memoir, were addressed.

The annexed letter from Thomson, whilst at the University, presents a favourable idea of his pursuits and opinions before he attained his majority.

Sir, Edinburgh, Dec. 11, 1720.

I RECEIVED yours, wherein you acquaint me that mine was very acceptable to you. I am heartily glad of it; and to wave all ceremony, if any thing I can scribble be entertaining to you, may I be damned to transcribe dull books for the press all my life if I do not write abundantly. I fondly embrace the proposal you make of a frequent correspondence this winter, and that from the very same principle you mention; and when the native bright ideas which flow from your good humour have the ascendant over those gloomy ones that attend your profession, I expect you will not be wanting.

You will allege that I have the advantage over you, being in town, where daily happen a variety of incidents. In the

first place you must know, though I live in Edinburgh, yet I am but little conversant in the beau monde, viz. concerts, balls, assemblies, &c. where beauty shines and coxcombs admire themselves. If nature had thrown me in a more soft and indolent mould, had made me a Shapely or a Sir Fopling Flutter, if fortune had filled my pockets, I suppose my head is empty enough as it is, had I been taught to cut a caper, to hum a tune, to take a pinch, and lisp nonsense with all the grace of fashionable insipidity, then I could—what could I have done? hardly write; but, however, I might have made a shift to fill up a half sheet with 'rat me,' 'damn me,' &c. interspersed with broken characters of ladies gliding over my fancy like a passing image over a mirror. But if both nature and fortune had been indulgent to me, and made me a rich, finished gentleman, yet would I have reckoned it a piece of my greatest happiness to be acquainted with you, and you should have had entertainment if it was within the circle of wit and beauty to afford it; but alas! as it is what can you expect from the Divinity hall or a Tippeny cell? It must be owned indeed, that here in Edinburgh, to us humble sons of Tippeny, if beauty were as propitious as wit sometimes, we would have no reason to complain of the superior fortune of the fluttering generation; and O! ye foolish women, who have thus bewitched you? is it not wit that immortalizes beauty, that heightens it, and preserves it in a fresh eternal bloom? And did ever a fop either justly praise or admire you? but perhaps what I am railing at is well ordered, and if there was such a familiar intercourse betwixt wit and beauty as I would have, wit would degenerate into softness and luxury, and lose all its edge and keenness; it would dissolve in sighs or burst in nonsense. Wit and beauty thus joined would be, as Shakespeare has it, making honey a sauce to sugar; and yet another would say that beauty, divine beauty! enlivens, heightens, and refines wit; that even wit is the necessary result of beauty, which puts the spirits in that harmonious motion that produces it, that tunes them to that ecstasy, and makes them dart through

the nerves, and sparkle in the eyes!—but whither am I rambling? What I am going to propose is, and you see there is great need for it, that you would in your next settle our correspondence into some order, and acquaint me on what subject you would have me write to you, for on news of any kind I shall soon run aground.

You write to me that Misjohn* and his quadruped are making a large eccentrical orbit, together with two or three wallets full of books, which I suppose will be multiplied into several more of papers before they return; belike they may have taken a trip into China, and then we shall have his travels. There is one thing I hear storied, God forbid it be true! that his horse is metamorphosing into an ass; and by the last accounts I had of it, its lugs are shot up into a strange length, and the cross was just beginning to dawn upon its shoulders; and, besides, as it one day was saluting a capful of oats, wonderful to tell! it fell a-braying. I wish Nanny Noble were so comfortably settled as you hint. Tell Misjohn, when you see him, that I have a bundle of worthies for him, if once I had received his packet.

There are some come from London here lately, that teach natural philosophy by way of shows by the beat of drum, but more of that afterwards. I designed to have sent you a manuscript poem, but I have no time till next week.

Yours heartily,

JAMES THOMSON.

Dr. Cranston appears to have furnished him with letters of introduction, to which he alludes in two letters written within the fortnight which preceded his departure for London. The observa-

* Thomson alludes in most of his letters to some friend by this appellation, and the Earl of Buchan observes, that it was "undoubtedly the Rev. Mr. J. Wilson, Minister of the Parish of Maxton in Roxburghshire, a particular friend of Dr. Cranston of Ancrum, and of Thomson."

tion on a future state, which occurs in the second of these letters, is the earliest expression of the Poet's religious opinions which has been discovered; and his correspondence, as well as his works, prove that they never varied.

Dear Sir, Edinburgh ———.

I RECEIVED yours and can never sufficiently resent the regard for my welfare that you show in them. You are so modest as to desire me to correct any thing I see amiss in your letter to Mr. Elliott, and you will transcribe it again; but I assure you I am not so vain as to attempt it: if there was no other thing to bind me to a good behaviour but your recommendation and character of me, I could go great lengths of mortification to answer them. Your letter to my cousin, I do not doubt, will be considerably useful to me, if I can find him out. I remember I heard that Mr. Colden's letter was very serviceable to George Brown. I do not doubt but if Mr. Colden was advertised, I might have one too, and there will be time enough, for our ship sails not this fortnight, yet during that time, if it can contribute any thing to your diversion, you shall hear from me every opportunity, and when I go to London, you may lay your account of paying out some sixpences. If you have leisure, I could wish to hear from you before I go away, notwithstanding your apostolical conclusion, which I believe is as sincere, and will be as effectual, as the best of them.

I am yours,

J. T.

TO DOCTOR CRANSTON, AT ANCRUM.

Dear Sir,

I RECEIVED yours, by which I find you have been as much concerned as Mr. Golden indifferent about me; he, good man, recommends me to God Almighty: very well; but I wish he had exerted something more of the layman on that

. . . for, to be deeply serious, the . . . . Father of mankind beholds all . . . offspring with a melting eye . . . needs none to prompt him to acts of goodness, so that I cannot conceive for what purpose people's prayers for one another are, unless it be to stir up humane and social dispositions in themselves. I have gotten several recommendations, and am promised more afterwards, when I am fixed on any particular view, which would make them more pointed and effectual; I shall do all that is in my power, act, hope, and so either make something out, or be buried in obscurity. There is, and I am persuaded of it, I triumph in it, another life after this, which depends as to its happiness on our virtue, as this for the most part on our fortune. My spirits have gotten such a serious turn by these reflections, that although I be thinking on Misjohn, I declare I shall hardly force a laugh before we part, for this I think will be my last letter from Edinburgh, for I expect to sail every day; well, since I was speaking of that merry soul, I hope he is as bright, as easy, as dégagé, as susceptible of an intense laugh as he used to be; tell him when you see him that I laugh in imagination with him, ha! ha! ha! Misjohn, how in the name of wonder dragged you so much good humour along with you through the thorny paths of systems and school divinity, considering the many hardy attempts you have had to epitomize . . . . . and so forth—whenever I began to rust in these —— exercises, the doctor cleared me—well, may wit, humour, and everlasting joy surround you both, and if I but at any time . . . kindle up the laugh from London, I shall be sure to ha . . . . returned upon . . . . with greater force.

Yours, while I am

JAMES THOMSON.

If you have the opportunity to be at Maxton, in Mr. Wilson's, there you will find a treasure of a good comrade, called Peter Murdoch, who will stay there these eight days.

His first letter to Dr. Cranston, after he arrived

in London, was dated on the 3rd of April, 1725. It expresses many fears for his success, and is interesting from the account of the impression made upon him by his first visit to the theatres. Amidst many playful remarks, and some levity in his criticism on the actors, and especially on the actresses, there is an anxiety manifested about his future career, which shows that the state of his resources and the uncertainty of his plans rendered his mind ill at ease.

Dear Sir, London, April 3, 1725.
I wish you joy of the spring.

I HAD yours some days since, the only letter I received since I came from Scotland. I was almost out of humour at the letter I wrote for to Mr. Elliott, since it so curtailed yours to me; I went and delivered it; he received me affably enough, and promised me his assistance, though at the same time he told me, which every one tells me, that it will be prodigiously difficult to succeed in the business you know I design. However, come what will come, I shall make an effort, and leave the rest to Providence. There is, I am persuaded, a necessary fixed chain of things, and I hope my fortune, whatever it be, shall be linked to diligence and honesty. If I should not succeed, in your next advise me what I should do. Succeed or not, I firmly resolve to pursue divinity as the only thing now I am fit for. Now if I cannot accomplish the design on which I came up, I think I had best make interest and pass my trials here, so that if I be obliged soon to return to Scotland again, I may not return no better than I came away: and to be deeply serious with you, the more I see of the vanity and wickedness of the world I am more inclined to that sacred office. I was going to bid you suppress that rising laugh, but I check myself severely again for suffering

such an unbecoming thought of you to enter into my mind—so much for business.

The playhouse is indeed a very fine entertainment, though not to the height I expected. A tragedy, I think, or a fine character in a comedy gives greater pleasure read than acted; but your fools and persons of a very whimsical and humorous character are a delicious morsel on the stage; they indeed exercise my risible faculty, and particularly your old friend Daniel, in Oroonoko, diverted me infinitely; the gravedigger in Hamlet, Beau Clincher and his brother, in the Trip to the Jubilee, pleased me extremely too. Mr. Booth has a very majestic appearance, a full, harmonious voice, and vastly exceeds them all in acting tragedy. The last act in Cato he does to perfection, and you would think he expired with the 'Oh! that ends it.' Mr. Wilks, I believe, has been a very fine actor for the fine gentleman and the young hero, but his face now is wrinkled, his voice broken; and age forbids the youthful, clear Cibber; I have not seen much of his action yet. Mills and Johnstoun are pretty good actors. Dicky Norris, that little comical, toothless devil, will turn his back and crack a very good jest yet: there are some others of them execrable. Mrs. Oldfield has a smiling jolly face, acts very well in comedy, but best of all I suppose in bed; she turns her body, and leers with her eyes most bewitchingly. Mrs. Porter excels in tragedy, has a short piercing voice, and enters most into her character, and if she did not act well she could not be endured, being more disagreeable in her appearance than any of them. Mrs. Booth acts some things very well, and particularly Ophelia's madness in Hamlet inimitably; but then she dances so deliciously, has such melting lascivious motions, airs, and postures, as indeed, according to what you suspect, almost throws the material part of me into action too; indeed the women are generally the handsomest in the house, and better actors than the men, but perhaps their sex prejudices me in their favour. These are a few of the observations I have made at Drury Lane Theatre hitherto, to which I have paid five

visits, but have not been at the New House yet. My purse will not keep pace with my inclinations in that matter. O! if I had Misjohn here, to see some of their top fools, he would shake the scenes with laughter. Give my service to him. Tell him I laugh at the thoughts of him, and should be very glad to hear from him. You may send your letters to my mother in Edinburgh in a line inclosed, desiring her to send them to me, which I have directed her to do, frank. However, you may send the next directly to me, to your cousin's care, and perhaps I shall fall upon a more expedite way. I must for the present stop here, and subscribe myself

Yours sincerely,

JAMES THOMSON.

It is said* that Mr. Forbes, who was afterwards Lord President of the Court of Session, was Thomson's earliest patron in London. This statement is established by a letter from the widow of that gentleman to Lord Buchan, in reply to his request that she would furnish him with any anecdotes of the Poet:

"I am sorry I cannot recollect any of those particular characteristic anecdotes your lordship says I told you of in the year 84, of my father and Mr. Thomson the poet; all the information I can give is, that they were intimate friends, my father having been Mr. Thomson's first acquaintance and patron on his coming to London, and the former having a numerous acquaintance amongst people of the first rank, and also amongst the literati folk; he did not fail to bring Thomson forward as much as lay in his power. His first introductions were to the Duke of Argyle, the Earl of Burlington, and Sir Robert Walpole, to Dr. Arbuthnot, Mr. Pope, and Mr. Gay.

* Memoirs, p. xviii.

"I remember, previous to the publication of his Seasons, that many long winter evenings the two were closeted, as I suppose correcting for the press, and I used to see loose pages of the manuscript lying interlined with my father's hand, who always expressed as great a value for Mr. Thomson's personal merit as for his poetical talents."

Thomson's next letter to Cranston, dated from East Barnet, on the 20th of July, 1725, is of great value, from the information which it affords of his situation. It fixes the date of his mother's death; it proves when he was a tutor in Lord Binning's family;* and it shews that his views were then strongly fixed upon the church.

Dear Doctor, East Barnet, July 20, 1725.

I CANNOT imagine the meaning of this long silence, unless my last letter has not come to your hand, which was written two or three months since. I would have seconded it before now, but one thing and another, particularly the severe affliction of my mother's death, incapacitated me for entertaining my friend. Now I am pretty much at ease in the country, ten miles from London, teaching Lord Binning's son to read, a low task, you know, not so suitable to my temper, but I must learn that necessary lesson of suiting my mind and temper to my state. I hope I shall not pass my time here without improvement, the great design of my coming hither, and then in due time, I resolve, through God's assistance, to consummate my original study of divinity; for you know the business of a tutor is only precarious and for the present. I approve, every day more and more, of your advice to your brother John, as to the direction of his study; if well pursued it is as honourable, useful, and certain a method of living as

* Memoir, p. xxii.

one, in his or my circumstances, could readily fall into . . . . . contemptible notions of things at home, and romantic ones of things abroad; perhaps I was too much affected that way, but I hope in the issue it shall not be worse for me . . . . . what he seemed to be fond of, viz. surgery. It is, as you cannot but know, the merest drug here in the world. Scotland is really fruitful of surgeons, they come here like flocks of vultures every day, and, by a merciful providential kind of instinct, transport themselves to foreign countries. The Change is quite full of them, they peruse the ship-bills and meet the sea captains. Pray let John know my sentiments in this matter, because through a giddy discontent I spoke too slightly to him of the study which he has now so happily espoused. I am not now in London, so cannot acquaint you with any thing that passes there within my narrow observation. Being there on Sunday last, I heard that every thing was very dead both with respect to the scribblers of politics and poetry. As for news you never want too many of them, they increase proportionally to their distance from their source, like rivers, or, since I am in the way of similes, like Discord, as she . . . . . person is to her small at first, but in a short time her body reaches from the zenith to the nadir, and her arms from one pole to the other, which is the case of fame. To sound as fame is, when great actions make a great noise. So news are a noise commonly about nothing. As for poetry, she is now a very strumpet, and so has lost all her life and spirit, or rather a common strumpet, passes herself upon the world for the chaste heaven-born virgin. All my other letters from this, if you will favour me with an answer, shall smell of the country. I need not tell you, I have a most affectionate regard for you, and it will give me as real a satisfaction to hear from you as any man: it will be a great pleasure to me likewise to hear of Mr. Rickerton's welfare, who deserves encouragement as much as any preacher in Scotland. Misjohn and his horse also would make a very

good paragraph: give my service to them both; to Mrs. and Miss Cranston, John, &c.

Yours sincerely,

J. THOMSON.

I cannot be certain whether Sir William Bennet has lost post or not. Your country news, though they may seem trifling, yet will be acceptable to me. My brother will readily wait upon you, who is just now setting up at Kelso.

The letter to Dr. Cranston in the Memoir,* to which the date September 1726 is assigned, was evidently the next communication to him, and must have been written in September 1725. "Winter" appeared in the March following, that is, March 1726, instead of March 1726-7.†

Notwithstanding that Thomson himself says that the idea of writing "Winter" was suggested by another poem on the same subject,‡ yet Warton states, in one of his notes on Pope, "My friend Mr. William Collins, author of the Persian Eclogues and Odes, assured me that Thomson informed him that he took the first hint and idea of writing his Seasons from the titles of Pope's four Pastorals." Warton adds, in another place, "when Thomson published his Winter in 1726, it lay a long time neglected, till Mr. Spence made honourable mention of it in his Essay on the Odyssey; which, becoming a popular book, made the poem universally known. Thomson always

* P. xiii. † Memoir, p. xix.

‡ Memoir, p. xvii.

acknowledged the use of this recommendation; and from this circumstance an intimacy commenced between the critic and the poet, which lasted till the lamented death of the latter, who was of a most amiable and benevolent temper. I have before me a letter of Mr. Spence to Pitt, earnestly begging him to subscribe to the quarto edition of Thomson's Seasons, and mentioning a design which Thomson had formed of writing a descriptive poem on Blenheim; a subject that would have shone in his hands."

A letter from Thomson to Cranston corroborates the statement that his brother John came to London, but that being attacked by a consumption he returned for the benefit of his native air.* It appears that he arrived in London before 1734, returned early in August 1735, and died in September following. That letter is of interest, not only from the fraternal kindness which it evinces, but from the notice of his pecuniary affairs and expectations, and of his poem of "Liberty," three parts of which were at that time published. His acquaintance with Mr. Lyttelton seems to have been then very slight, even if he was at all known to him.

Dear Sir, London, August the 7th, 1735.

THE bearer hereof, my brother, was seized last spring with a severe cold, which seems to have fallen upon his lungs, and has reduced him to such a low condition, that his physician

* Memoir, p. xcii.

here advises him to try what his native air can do, as the only remaining means of recovery. In his present melancholy circumstances, it gives me no small satisfaction to think that he will have the benefit of your directions: and for me to spend more words in recommending him to your care were, I flatter myself, a superfluous formality. Your old acquaintance Anderson attends him; and besides what is necessary to defray the expenses of their journey, I have only given my brother five guineas; choosing rather to remit him the money he will afterwards want, which shall be done upon the first notice.

My brother's illness puts me in mind of that which afflicted you some years ago; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I reflect on your recovery: your health I hope is perfectly established; health being the life of life. I will not make you the compliments which I justly could upon that subject; the sentiments of the heart are generally plain, and mine rejoices in your welfare.

Should you inquire into my circumstances: They blossomed pretty well of late, the Chancellor having given me the office of Secretary of the Briefs under him: but the blight of an idle inquiry into the fees and offices of the courts of justice, which arose of late, seems to threaten its destruction. In that case I am made to hope amends: to be reduced, however, from enjoyment to hope, will be but an awkward affair —awkward or not, hope and I (I hope) shall never part. Hope is the breath in the nostrils of happiness, when that goes this dies. But then one ought at the same time to distinguish betwixt the fair star of hope, and that meteor, court-expectation. With regard to the last, I subscribe to a new Beatitude of Pope's or Swift's I think it is—Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.

You will see by the three first parts of a poem called Liberty, which I send you, that I still attempt the barren but delightful mountain of Parnassus. I have poured into it several of those ideas which I gathered in my travels and particularly from classic ground. It is to consist of two

parts more, which I design to publish next winter. Not quite to tantalize you, I send you likewise some of the best things that have been printed here of late, among which Mr. Pope's second volume of miscellanies is eminent, and in it his Essay on Man. The first volume of his Miscellany Poems was printed long ago, and is every where. His Letters were piratically printed by the infamous Curl. Though Mr. Pope be much concerned at their being printed, yet are they full of wit, humour, good sense, and what is best of all, a good heart. One Mr. Lyttelton, a young gentleman, and member of parliament, wrote the Persian Letters. They are reckoned prettily done. The book on the Sacrament is writ by Hoadly, Bishop of Winchester. All bigots roar against it, consequently it will work your Misjohns. I wish I could send you more entertainment of this kind: but a new gothic night seems to be approaching, the great year, the millenium of dulness.

Believe me most affectionately yours,

J. THOMSON.

Remember me kindly to friends, and direct to me, should you favour me with a letter, at the Lancaster Coffee House, Lancaster Court, in the Strand, London.

Dr. Cranston informed him of the death of his brother, in a letter dated on the 23rd of September, but he did not reply to it until the 20th of October, as it did not come to his hands sooner, in consequence of his being on a visit to Mr. Bubb Dodington, to whom he dedicated his "Spring," at Eastbury, in Dorsetshire. His reflections on death are well expressed, and the allusion to his own ideas of a future state of happiness, that it consists in a progressive increase of beatitude, is deserving of attention. This letter is valuable

also, because it contains some lines on the death of his young friend, Mr. Talbot,* which were intended for insertion in "Liberty," instead of those which occur.

Dear Sir,

BEING but lately returned from Mr. Dodington's seat, in Dorsetshire, I only received yours of September the 23d, a few days ago. The account it brought me of my brother's death, I was pretty much prepared against, considering the almost hopeless condition he had for some time been in. What you mention is the true point of view wherein to place the death of relations and friends. They then are past our regret: the living are to be lamented, and not the dead. And this is so true and natural, that people when they grieve for the death of those they love, from a principle of compassion for the departed, without a return upon themselves, they envisage them in the article of death, and under the pains both real and imagined thereof; that is to say, they grieve for them whilst they were alive. Death is a limit which human passions ought not, but with great caution and reverence to pass. Nor, indeed, can they easily pass that limit; since beyond it things are not clearly and distinctly enough perceived formally to excite them. This, I think, we may be sure of, that a future state must be better than this; and so on through the never-ceasing succession of future states; every one rising upon the last, an everlasting new display of infinite goodness! But hereby hangs a system, not calculated perhaps for the meridian where you live, though for that of your own mind, and too long to be explained in a letter. I will conclude these thoughts by giving you some lines of a copy of verses I wrote on my friend, Mr. Talbot's death, and designed at first to be prefixed to LIBERTY, but afterwards reduced to those you see stand there. Perhaps sometime or other I may publish the whole.

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* Memoir, p. xxxiv.

Be then the startling tear,
Or selfish, or mistaken, wiped away.
By death the good, from reptile matter raised,
And upward soaring to superior day,
With pity hear our plaints, with pity see
Our ignorance of tears; if e'er indeed,
Amid the woes of life, they quench their joys.
Why should we cloud a friend's exalted state
With idle grief, tenaciously prolonged
Beyond the lovely drops that frailty sheds,
Surprised? No, rather thence less fond of life,
Yet still the lot enjoying heaven allows,
Attend we, cheerful, the rejoining hour.
Children of nature! let us not reject,
Froward, the good we have for what we want.
Since all by turns must spread the sable sail,
Driven to the coast that never makes return,
But where we happy hope to meet again;
Sooner or later, a few anxious years,
Still fluttering on the wing, not much imports.
Eternal Goodness reigns: be this our stay;
A subject for the past of grateful song,
And for the future of undrooping hope.

Every thing, it seems, is a subject of contention in this interested world. Let his little effects be all given to his cousin, Thomas Turnbull, who so kindly attended him in his illness. Only his great coat, jockey coat, I mean, may be given to David of Minto, since he, I hear, desires it. Very likely he took it amiss that my brother was not lodged with him, but my aunt of Chesters I thought more proper to tend and soften his sickness, she being a very good tender-hearted woman. Let her son Thomas therefore have all his effects, except it be the aforesaid jockey coat. I shall be glad besides to render them all other service.

Please to let me know to whom I shall pay what is due upon my brother's account. Your goodness on this occasion

gives me no new sentiment of satisfaction; it is what I have been long acquainted with. If you would still add to your obligations, lay freely your commands upon me whenever I can be of any service to you.

There are no news here. The king is expected this week. A battle likewise is by some expected; we hungered and thirsted after . . . . Seckendorff and Belle-Isle. But the French and Germans seem to have fought enough last campaign in Italy, to excuse them for this. The gallant French this year have made war upon the Germans, I beg their politeness's pardon, like vermin—eat them up. Hang them all. If they make war it is to rob, if peace to cheat one another. Such are the noble dispositions of mankind at present. But before I fall into a bad humour I will take my leave of you, being always,

My dear Friend,
Your most affectionate humble Servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

London, Oct. 20th, 1735.

Pray remember me kindly to all friends.

To the remark,* that a material difference exists between "The Seasons" as they first appeared and as they now stand, it ought to have been added that Dr. Bell, Thomson's nephew, meditated a variorum edition of that work. In a letter to Lord Buchan, in June 1791, he says,

In the improved edition of Spring are added 85 lines, in Summer 599, in Autumn 96, and in Winter 188, making a total of 968 lines."

In another letter to Lord Buchan, written in September, 1791, Dr. Bell observes:

"I have begun to collate the Seasons—the

* Memoir, p. xxv.

edition 1730 with that of 1744. As I proceed in the work, I have more and more reason to think that my labour will not be unworthy of the attention of the public. A great many beautiful passages in the edition of 1730 are entirely struck out of all subsequent editions, and the other alterations made are considerable, far more than I had any conception of previous to collating them with accuracy. The improvements made on the edition 1744 will be taken notice of; they are highly important."

Dr. Bell did not execute his design, but a duodecimo edition of the Seasons was published by Sibbald, at Edinburgh, in 1789, containing, at the end, the variations between the last and previous impressions.

Johnson's remark on the alteration and curtailment made by Lord Lyttelton in "Liberty" was too hastily repeated in the Memoir,* for it was afterwards discovered that there is not the slightest ground for it. This had also occurred to Dr. Bell, who says, in one of his letters to Lord Buchan:

"I am at a loss to understand what Dr. Johnson means by saying, in his Life of Thomson, that Sir George Lyttelton shortened the poem of Liberty. I have just now before me the Edition of Liberty, printed by Millar, 1735-1736, and, instead of abridgements after this, find that above

* P. xl.

two dozen of lines have been added, twelve to part first, ten to part second, and one to part third. Your lordship might, perhaps, be able to detect whether that arch-hypercritic be right or wrong. I suspect he is in a mistake, but have no good reason for saying so, save the opinion I have of the presumption and arrogance of the man."

An edition of Milton's "Areopagitica" was published about 1740, to which Thomson wrote the preface.

The "Amanda" of Thomson was Miss Elizabeth Young, who married Vice Admiral John Campbell; and the late Mr. Coutts, in reply to an inquiry of Lord Buchan in 1792, stated, that the late Admiral Campbell was his "most intimate and worthy friend," adding, "Mrs. Campbell was certainly the Amanda of Thomson, and he wished to have married her, but his want of fortune proved a bar in the way of their union.*

* In the same letter Mr. Coutts thus speaks of Thomson's intimate friend, Dr. Armstrong: "Mr. Dundas can find nothing of Dr. Armstrong. What a pity almost all that worthy man and elegant judicious poet's works have been lost, or fallen a sacrifice in the fire to his delicacy of mind. He had so correct a taste, and so clear a judgment, that he was never pleased in the morning with what he had written over night. And when he went to Germany, in the army, he packed up a number of things in a portmanteau, which he left in careless hands, and it was lost: also in Germany, upon some alarm from the enemy, he lost another portmanteau, which, I am persuaded, contained many valuable things."

There is reason to believe that a fragment of a poem was found amongst Thomson's papers, as Dr. Bell remarks, in his letter to Lord Buchan, in September, 1791 :

" I remember to have heard my aunt, Mrs. Thomson, say, that the outlines of a fine poem were found among her brother's papers after his death. If this was the case, Mr. Gray, of Richmond Hill, got possession of them. The heirs of that gentleman will be able to ascertain the fact; and to put it in my power, if they are worthy of Thomson's character, to give them to the public. Your lordship has taken so much trouble in this little plan of mine, that I am ashamed to throw out this hint."

Elizabeth, the Poet's second sister, who married the Reverend Robert Bell,* was, according to her son, Dr. Bell, " the favourite and best beloved sister of Caledonia's bard."

An original picture of Thomson, by Slaughter, is preserved at Dryburgh Abbey, the seat of Lord Buchan. It belonged to the Poet, and hung in the room he used at Slaughter's Coffee-house. On the back is this inscription, in his Lordship's hand writing :

" Procured for the Earl of Buchan by his friend, Richard Cooper, Esq., engraver. Thomson and his friends, Dr. Anderson, Peter Mur-

* Memoir, p. xcii.

doch, &c. used to frequent Old Slaughter's Coffee house, London, and his portrait was painted at that time by Slaughter, a kinsman of old Slaughter.

Dec. 3, 1812. BUCHAN."

His Lordship's seal is added. This portrait has been engraved.

A monument to Thomson has been at length erected on an eminence, about half way between Kelso and Ednam, but the only admiration it is likely to excite is for the motives of those to whom it owes its existence. Taste is rarer even than money; and it is lamentable to reflect that, however calculated the monuments in this country, to departed greatness, may be to exalt the fame of the deceased, they have a contrary effect upon the reputation of the persons who superintended their erection.

PREFACE.*

I AM neither ignorant nor concerned how much one may suffer in the opinion of several persons of great gravity and character by the study and pursuit of poetry.

Although there may seem to be some appearance of reason for the present contempt of it, as managed by the most part of our modern writers, yet that any man should, seriously, declare against that divine art is really amazing. It is declaring against the most charming power of imagination, the most exalting force of thought, the most affecting touch of sentiment; in a word, against the very soul of all learning and politeness. It is affronting the universal taste of mankind, and declaring against what has charmed the listening world from Moses down to Milton. In fine, it is even declaring against the sublimest passages of the inspired writings themselves, and what seems to be the peculiar language of Heaven.

The truth of the case is this: these weak-sighted gentlemen cannot bear the strong light of poetry, and the finer and more amusing scene of things it displays; but must those, therefore, whom Heaven has blessed with the discerning eye, shut it to keep them company.

It is pleasant enough, however, to observe, frequently, in these enemies of poetry, an awkward imitation of it. They sometimes have their little brightnesses, when the opening glooms will permit. Nay, I have seen their heaviness, on some occasions, deign to turn friskish and witty, in which they make just such another figure as Æsop's Ass, when he began to fawn. To complete the absurdity they would, even in their efforts against poetry, fain be poetical; like those gentlemen that reason with a great deal of zeal and severity against reason.

That there are frequent and notorious abuses of poetry is as true as that the best things are most liable to that misfortune; but is there no end of that clamorous argument

* By Thomson, prefixed to the second edition of Winter, 1726.

against the use of things from the abuse of them? And yet I hope that no man, who has the least sense of shame in him, will fall into it after the present sulphureous attacker of the stage.

To insist no further on this head, let poetry once more be restored to her ancient truth and purity; let her be inspired from heaven; and, in return, her incense ascend thither: let her exchange her low, venal, trifling subjects for such as are fair, useful, and magnificent; and let her execute these so as at once to please, instruct, surprise, and astonish; and then, of necessity, the most inveterate ignorance and prejudice shall be struck dumb, and poets yet become the delight and wonder of mankind.

But this happy period is not to be expected till some long-wished illustrious man, of equal power and beneficence, rise on the wintry world of letters; one of a genuine and unbounded greatness and generosity of mind; who, far above all the pomp and pride of fortune, scorns the little, addressful flatterer, pierces through the disguised designing villain, discountenances all the reigning fopperies of a tasteless age, and who, stretching his views into late futurity, has the true interest of virtue, learning, and mankind entirely at heart. A character, so nobly desirable! that, to an honest heart, it is almost incredible so few should have the ambition to deserve it.

Nothing can have a better influence towards the revival of poetry than the choosing of great and serious subjects, such as at once amuse the fancy, enlighten the head, and warm the heart. These give a weight and dignity to the poem, nor is the pleasure, I should say rapture, both the writer and the reader feels, unwarranted by reason, or followed by repentant disgust. To be able to write on a dry, barren theme, is looked upon by some as the sign of a happy, fruitful, genius —fruitful indeed! like one of the pendent gardens in Cheapside, watered every morning by the hand of the alderman himself. And what are we commonly entertained with on these occasions, save forced, unaffecting fancies, little, glittering prettinesses, mixed turns of wit and expression, which are as widely different from native poetry as buffoonery is from the perfection of human thinking. A genius fired with the charms of truth and nature is tuned to a sublimer pitch, and scorns to associate with such subjects.

I cannot more emphatically recommend this poetical ambition than by the four following lines from Mr. Hill's poem,

called The Judgment Day, which is so singular an instance of it.

For me, suffice it to have taught my muse
The tuneful triflings of her tribe to shun;
And raised her warmth such heavenly themes to choose,
As, in past ages, the best garlands won.

I know no subject more elevating, more amusing, more ready to awake the poetical enthusiasm, the philosophical reflection, and the moral sentiment than the works of Nature. Where can we meet with such variety, such beauty, such magnificence? All that enlarges and transports the soul? What more inspiring than a calm, wide survey of them? In every dress nature is greatly charming! whether she puts on the crimson robes of the morning! the strong effulgence of noon! the sober suit of the evening! or the deep sables of blackness and tempest! How gay looks the Spring! how glorious the Summer! how pleasing the Autumn! and how venerable the Winter!—But there is no thinking of these things without breaking out into poetry, which is, by the by, a plain and undeniable argument of their superior excellence.

For this reason the best, both ancient and modern, poets have been passionately fond of retirement and solitude. The wild romantic country was their delight. And they seem never to have been more happy than when lost in unfrequented fields, far from the little busy world, they were at leisure to meditate, and sing the works of nature.

The Book of Job, that noble and ancient poem, which even strikes so forcibly through a mangling translation, is crowned with a description of the grand works of nature, and that, too, from the mouth of their Almighty Author.

It was this devotion to the works of nature, that, in his Georgics, inspired the rural Virgil to write so inimitably; and who can forbear joining with him in this declaration of his, which has been the rapture of ages?

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,
Quarum sacra fero ingenti perculsus amore,
Accipiant; Cœlique vias et sidera monstrent,
Defectus solis varios, lunæque labores:
Unde tremor terris: qua vi maria alta tumescant
Obicibus ruptis, rursusque in seipsa residant:
Quid tantum oceano properent se tingere soles
Hyberni: vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obstat.
Sin, has ne possim naturæ accedere partes,
Frigidus obstiterit circum præcordia sanguis;

Rura mihi et rigui placeant in valibus amnis
Flumina amem silvasque inglorius.

Which may be englished thus:

Me may the Muses, my supreme delight!
Whose priest I am, smit with immense desire,
Snatch to their care; the starry tracts disclose,
The sun's distress, the labours of the moon;
Whence the earth quakes; and by what force the deeps
Heave at the rocks, then on themselves reflow:
Why winter-suns to plunge in ocean speed;
And what retards the lazy summer-night.
But, lest I should these mystic truths attain,
If the cold current freezes round my heart,
The country me, the brooky vales may please
Mid woods and streams unknown.

I cannot put an end to this Preface without taking the freedom to offer my most sincere and grateful acknowledgments to all those gentlemen who have given my first performance so favourable a reception.

It is with the best pleasure, and a rising ambition, that I reflect on the honour Mr. Hill has done me in recommending my poem to the world after a manner so peculiar to himself, than whom none approves and obliges with a nobler and more unreserving promptitude of soul. His favours are the very smiles of humanity, graceful and easy, flowing from and to the heart. This agreeable train of thought awakens naturally in my mind all the other parts of his great and amiable character, which I know not well how to quit, and yet dare not here pursue.

Every Reader, who has a heart to be moved, must feel the most gentle power of poetry in the lines with which Mira has graced my poem.

It perhaps might be reckoned vanity in me, to say how richly I value the approbation of a gentleman of Mr. Malloch's fine and exact taste, so justly dear and valuable to all those that have the happiness of knowing him; and who, to say no more of him, will abundantly make good to the world the early promise his admired piece of William and Margaret has given.

I only wish my description of the various appearance of Nature in Winter, and, as I purpose, in the other Seasons, may have the good fortune to give the Reader some of that true pleasure which they, in their agreeable succession, are always sure to inspire into my heart.

TO MR. THOMSON,

DOUBTFUL TO WHAT PATRON HE SHOULD ADDRESS HIS POEM CALLED WINTER.

SOME peers, perhaps, have skill to judge, 'tis true ;
Yet no mean prospect bounds the Muse's view.
Firm in your native strength, thus nobly shown,
Slight such delusive props, and stand alone ;
Fruitless dependance oft has found too late
That greatness rarely dwells among the great.
Patrons are Nature's nobles, not the state's,
And wit's a title no broad seal creates :
E'en kings, from whose high source all honours flow,
Are poor in power when they would souls bestow.

Heedless of fortune then look down on state,
Balanced within by reason's conscious weight :
Divinely proud of independent will,
Prince of your passions, live their sovereign still.
He who stoops safe beneath a patron's shade
Shines, like the moon, but by another's aid ;
Free truth should open and unbias'd steer,
Strong as heaven's heat, and as its brightness clear.

O, swell not then the bosoms of the vain
With false conceit that you protection gain ;
Poets, like you, their own protectors stand,
Placed above aid from pride's inferior hand.
Time, that devours the lord's unlasting name,
Shall lend her soundless depth to float your fame.

On verse like yours no smiles from power expect,
Born with a worth that doom'd you to neglect ;
Yet, would your wit be noised, reflect no more,
Let the smooth veil of flattery silk you o'er ;
Aptly attach'd, the court's soft climate try,
Learn your pen's duty from your patron's eye.
Ductile of soul, each pliant purpose wind,
And, tracing interest close, leave doubt behind :
Then shall your name strike loud the public ear ;
For through good fortune virtue's self shines clear.

But, in defiance of our taste, to charm!
And fancy's force with judgment's caution arm!
Disturb, with busy thought, so lull'd an age!
And plant strong meanings o'er the peaceful page!
Impregnate sound with sense! teach nature art!
And warm e'en Winter till it thaws the heart!
How could you thus your country's rules transgress,
Yet think of patrons, and presume success?

A. Hill.

TO MR. THOMSON,

ON HIS BLOOMING WINTER.

Oh gaudy summer, veil thy blushing head,
Dull is thy sun, and all thy beauties dead:
From thy short nights, and noisy mirthful day,
My kindling thoughts, disdainful, turn away.

Majestic Winter with his floods appears,
And o'er the world his awful terrors rears:
From north to south his train dispreading slow,
Blue frost, bleak rain, and fleecy-footed snow.

In thee, sad Winter, I a kindred find,
Far more related to poor human kind;
To thee my gently drooping head I bend,
Thy sigh my sister, and thy tear my friend;
On thee I muse, and in thy hastening sun,
See life expiring e'er 'tis well begun.

Thy sickening ray and venerable gloom
Show life's last scene, the solitary tomb;
But thou art safe, so shaded by the bays,
Immortal in the noblest poet's praise;
From time and death he will thy beauties save;
Oh may such numbers weep o'er Mira's grave!
Secure and glorious would her ashes lie,
Till Nature fade—and all the Seasons die.

Mira.

TO MR. THOMSON,

ON HIS PUBLISHING THE SECOND EDITION OF HIS POEM, CALLED WINTER.

CHARM'D and instructed by thy powerful song,
I have, unjust, withheld my thanks too long;
This debt of gratitude at length receive,
Warmly sincere, 'tis all thy friend can give.

Thy worth new lights the poet's darken'd name,
And shows it, blazing, in the brightest fame.
Through all thy various Winter full are found,
Magnificence of thought and pomp of sound,
Clear depth of sense, expression's heightening grace,
And goodness, eminent in power and place!
For this, the wise, the knowing few commend
With zealous joy—for thou art virtue's friend:
Even age and truth severe, in reading thee,
That Heaven inspires the muse, convinced agree.

Thus I dare sing of merit faintly known,
Friendless—supported by itself alone:
For those whose aided will could lift thee high
In fortune, see not with discernment's eye.
Nor place nor power bestows the sight refined,
And wealth enlarges not the narrow mind.

How couldst thou think of such and write so well?
Or hope reward by daring to excel!
Unskilful of the age! untaught to gain
Those favours which the fawning base obtain!
A thousand shameful arts to thee unknown,
Falsehood and flattery must be first thy own.
If thy loved country lingers in thy breast,
Thou must drive out the unprofitable guest;
Extinguish each bright aim that kindles there,
And centre in thyself thy every care.

But hence that vileness—pleased to charm mankind,
Cast each low thought of interest far behind:
Neglected into noble scorn—away
From that worn path where vulgar poets stray;
Inglorious herd! profuse of venal lays!
And by the pride despised they stoop to praise!
Thou, careless of the statesman's smile or frown,
Tread that straight way that leads to fair renown.
By virtue guided, and by glory fired,
And by reluctant envy slow admired,
Dare to do well, and in thy boundless mind
Embrace the general welfare of thy kind;
Enrich them with the treasures of thy thought,
What Heaven approves and what the Muse has taught.
Where thy power fails, unable to go on,
Ambitious, greatly will the good undone.
So shall thy name, through ages, brightening shine,
And distant praise from worth unborn be thine.
So shalt thou, happy! merit Heaven's regard,
And find a glorious, though a late reward.

D. Malloch.

SPRING.

Et nunc omnis ager, nunc omnis parturit arbos,
Nunc frondent silvæ, nunc formosissimus annus.

VIRG.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COUNTESS OF HERTFORD.

MADAM,

I HAVE always observed that, in addresses of this nature, the general taste of the world demands ingenious turns of wit, and disguised artful periods, instead of an open sincerity of sentiment flowing in a plain expression. From what secret impatience of the justest praise, when bestowed on others, this often proceeds, rather than a pretended delicacy, is beyond my purpose here to inquire. But as nothing is more foreign to the disposition of a soul sincerely pleased with the contemplation of what is beautiful, and excellent, than wit and turn; I have too much respect for your Ladyship's character, either to touch it in that gay, trifling manner, or venture on a particular detail of those truly amiable qualities of which it is composed. A mind exalted, pure, and elegant, a heart overflowing with humanity, and the whole train of virtues thence derived,

that give a pleasing spirit to conversation, an engaging simplicity to the manners, and form the life to harmony, are rather to be felt, and silently admired, than expressed. I have attempted, in the following Poem, to paint some of the most tender beauties and delicate appearances of nature; how much in vain, your Ladyship's taste will, I am afraid, but too soon discover: yet would it still be a much easier task to find expression for all that variety of colour, form, and fragrance, which enrich the season I describe, than to speak the many nameless graces and native riches of a mind capable so much at once to relish solitude, and adorn society. To whom then could these sheets be more properly inscribed than to you, Madam, whose influence in the world can give them the protection they want, while your fine imagination, and intimate acquaintance with rural nature, will recommend them with the greatest advantage to your favourable notice? Happy! if I have hit any of those images, and correspondent sentiments, your calm evening walks, in the most delightful retirement, have oft inspired. I could add too, that as this Poem grew up under your encouragement, it has therefore a natural claim to your patronage. Should you read it with approbation, its music

shall not droop; and should it have the good fortune to deserve your smiles, its roses shall not wither. But, where the subject is so tempting, lest I begin my Poem before the Dedication is ended, I here break short, and beg leave to subscribe myself, with the highest respect,

MADAM,

Your most obedient,

humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

SPRING.

ARGUMENT.

THE subject proposed. Inscribed to the Countess of Hertford. The Season is described as it affects the various parts of Nature, ascending from the lower to the higher; with digressions arising from the subject. Its influence on inanimate Matter, on Vegetables, on brute Animals, and last on Man; concluding with a dissuasive from the wild and irregular passion of Love, opposed to that of a pure and happy kind.

SPRING.

Come, gentle Spring! ethereal Mildness! come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.
O Hertford, fitted or to shine in courts
With unaffected grace, or walk the plain
With innocence and meditation join'd
In soft assemblage, listen to my song,
Which thy own Season paints; when Nature all
Is blooming and benevolent, like thee.
And see where surly Winter passes off,
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
The shatter'd forest, and the ravaged vale;
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless: so that scarce
The bittern knows his time, with bill ingulf'd,
To shake the sounding marsh; or from the shore
The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,
And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.
At last from Aries rolls the bounteous sun,
And the bright Bull receives him. Then no more
The expansive atmosphere is cramp'd with cold;
But, full of life and vivifying soul,
Lifts the light clouds sublime, and spreads them thin,
Fleecy, and white, o'er all-surrounding heaven.
Forth fly the tepid airs: and unconfined,
Unbinding earth, the moving softness strays.
Joyous, the impatient husbandman perceives
Relenting Nature, and his lusty steers
Drives from their stalls, to where the well used plough
Lies in the furrow, loosen'd from the frost.
There, unrefusing, to the harness'd yoke
They lend their shoulder, and begin their toil,
Cheer'd by the simple song and soaring lark.
Meanwhile incumbent o'er the shining share
The master leans, removes the obstructing clay,
Winds the whole work, and sidelong lays the glebe.
While through the neighbouring fields the sower stalks,

With measured step, and liberal throws the grain
Into the faithful bosom of the ground;
The harrow follows harsh, and shuts the scene.
Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious Man
Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow!
Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,
Into the perfect year! Nor ye who live
In luxury and ease, in pomp and pride,
Think these lost themes unworthy of your ear:
Such themes as these the rural Maro sung
To wide-imperial Rome, in the full height
Of elegance and taste, by Greece refined.
In ancient times the sacred plough employ'd
The kings and awful fathers of mankind:
And some, with whom compared your insect-tribes
Are but the beings of a summer's day,
Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
Of mighty war; then, with unwearied hand,
Disdaining little delicacies, seized
The plough, and greatly independent lived.
Ye generous Britons, venerate the plough!
And o'er your hills, and long withdrawing vales,
Let Autumn spread his treasures to the sun,
Luxuriant and unbounded: as the sea,
Far through his azure turbulent domain,
Your empire owns, and from a thousand shores
Wafts all the pomp of life into your ports;
So with superior boon may your rich soil,

Exuberant, Nature's better blessings pour
O'er every land, the naked nations clothe,
And be the exhaustless granary of a world!
Nor only through the lenient air this change,
Delicious, breathes; the penetrative sun,
His force deep-darting to the dark retreat
Of vegetation, sets the steaming Power
At large, to wander o'er the verdant earth,
In various hues; but chiefly thee, gay green!
Thou smiling Nature's universal robe!
United light and shade! where the sight dwells
With growing strength, and ever-new delight.
From the moist meadow to the wither'd hill,
Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
And swells, and deepens, to the cherish'd eye.
The hawthorn whitens; and the juicy groves
Put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees,
Till the whole leafy forest stands display'd,
In full luxuriance to the sighing gales;
Where the deer rustle through the twining brake,
And the birds sing conceal'd. At once array'd
In all the colours of the flushing year,
By Nature's swift and secret working hand,
The garden glows, and fills the liberal air
With lavish fragrance; while the promised fruit
Lies yet a little embryo, unperceived,
Within its crimson folds. Now from the town
Buried in smoke, and sleep, and noisome damps,
Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,

Where freshness breathes, and dash the trembling drops
From the bent bush, as through the verdant maze
Of sweetbriar hedges I pursue my walk;
Or taste the smell of dairy; or ascend
Some eminence, Augusta, in thy plains,
And see the country, far diffused around,
One boundless blush, one white-empurpled shower
Of mingled blossoms; where the raptured eye
Hurries from joy to joy, and, hid beneath
The fair profusion, yellow Autumn spies.
If, brush'd from Russian wilds, a cutting gale
Rise not, and scatter from his humid wings
The clammy mildew; or, dry-blowing, breathe
Untimely frost; before whose baleful blast
The full-blown Spring through all her foliage shrinks,
Joyless and dead, a wide-dejected waste.
For oft, engender'd by the hazy north,
Myriads on myriads, insect armies warp
Keen in the poison'd breeze; and wasteful eat,
Through buds and bark, into the blacken'd core,
Their eager way. A feeble race! yet oft
The sacred sons of vengeance; on whose course
Corrosive Famine waits, and kills the year.
To check this plague, the skilful farmer chaff
And blazing straw before his orchard burns;
Till, all involved in smoke, the latent foe
From every cranny suffocated falls:

Or scatters o'er the blooms the pungent dust
Of pepper, fatal to the frosty tribe:
Or, when the envenom'd leaf begins to curl,
With sprinkled water drowns them in their nest;
Nor, while they pick them up with busy bill,
The little trooping birds unwisely scares.
Be patient, swains; these cruel seeming winds
Blow not in vain. Far hence they keep repress'd
Those deepening clouds on clouds, surcharged with rain,
That o'er the vast Atlantic hither borne,
In endless train, would quench the summer-blaze,
And, cheerless, drown the crude unripen'd year.
The north-east spends his rage; he now shut up
Within his iron cave, the effusive south
Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of Heaven
Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
Scarce staining ether; but by swift degrees,
In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
Along the loaded sky, and mingling deep
Sits on the horizon round a settled gloom:
Not such as wintry-storms on mortals shed,
Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of Nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm; that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves

Of aspin tall. The' uncurling floods, diffused
In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and mute-imploring eye
The falling verdure. Hush'd in short suspense,
The plumy people streak their wings with oil,
To throw the lucid moisture trickling off:
And wait the approaching sign to strike, at once,
Into the general choir. E'en mountains, vales,
And forests seem, impatient, to demand
The promised sweetness. Man superior walks
Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
And looking lively gratitude. At last,
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow,
In large effusion, o'er the freshened world.
The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard,
By such as wander through the forest walks,
Beneath the umbrageous multitude of leaves.
But who can hold the shade, while Heaven descends
In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap?
Swift Fancy fired anticipates their growth;
And, while the milky nutriment distils,
Beholds the kindling country colour round.

Thus all day long the full-distended clouds
Indulge their genial stores, and well-shower'd earth

Is deep enrich'd with vegetable life;
Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
Looks out, effulgent, from amid the flush
Of broken clouds, gay-shifting to his beam.
The rapid radiance instantaneous strikes
The illumined mountain, through the forest streams,
Shakes on the floods, and in a yellow mist,
Far smoking o'er the interminable plain,
In twinkling myriads lights the dewy gems.
Moist, bright, and green, the landscape laughs around.
Full swell the woods; their every music wakes,
Mix'd in wild concert with the warbling brooks
Increased, the distant bleatings of the hills,
And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
Whence blending all the sweeten'd zephyr springs.
Meantime, refracted from yon eastern cloud,
Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
Shoots up immense; and every hue unfolds,
In fair proportion running from the red
To where the violet fades into the sky.
Here, awful Newton, the dissolving clouds
Form, fronting on the sun, thy showery prism;
And to the sage instructed eye unfold
The various twine of light, by thee disclosed
From the white mingling maze. Not so the boy;
He wondering views the bright enchantment bend,
Delightful o'er the radiant fields, and runs

To catch the falling glory; but amazed
Beholds the amusive arch before him fly,
Then vanish quite away. Still night succeeds,
A softened shade, and saturated earth
Awaits the morning-beam, to give to light,
Raised through ten thousand different plastic tubes,
The balmy treasures of the former day.
Then spring the living herbs, profusely wild,
O'er all the deep-green earth, beyond the power
Of botanist to number up their tribes:
Whether he steals along the lonely dale,
In silent search; or through the forest, rank
With what the dull incurious weeds account,
Bursts his blind way; or climbs the mountain rock,
Fired by the nodding verdure of its brow.
With such a liberal hand has Nature flung
Their seeds abroad, blown them about in winds,
Innumerous mix'd them with the nursing mould,
The moistening current, and prolific rain.
But who their virtues can declare? who pierce,
With vision pure, into these secret stores
Of health, and life, and joy? the food of Man,
While yet he lived in innocence, and told
A length of golden years; unflesh'd in blood,
A stranger to the savage arts of life,
Death, rapine, carnage, surfeit, and disease;
The lord, and not the tyrant, of the world.
The first fresh dawn then waked the gladden'd race

Of uncorrupted Man, nor blush'd to see
The sluggard sleep beneath its sacred beam;
For their light slumbers gently fumed away;
And up they rose as vigorous as the sun,
Or to the culture of the willing glebe,
Or to the cheerful tendance of the flock.
Meantime the song went round; and dance and sport,
Wisdom and friendly talk, successive, stole
Their hours away: while in the rosy vale
Love breath'd his infant sighs, from anguish free,
And full replete with bliss; save the sweet pain,
That inly thrilling, but exalts it more.
Not yet injurious act, nor surly deed,
Was known among those happy sons of Heaven;
For reason and benevolence were law.
Harmonious Nature too look'd smiling on.
Clear shone the skies, cool'd with eternal gales,
And balmy spirit all. The youthful sun
Shot his best rays, and still the gracious clouds
Dropp'd fatness down; as o'er the swelling mead
The herds and flocks, commixing, play'd secure.
This when, emergent from the gloomy wood,
The glaring lion saw, his horrid heart
Was meeken'd, and he join'd his sullen joy;
For music held the whole in perfect peace:
Soft sigh'd the flute; the tender voice was heard,
Warbling the varied heart; the woodlands round

Applied their quire; and winds and waters flow'd
In consonance. Such were those prime of days.
But now those white unblemish'd manners, whence
The fabling poets took their golden age,
Are found no more amid these iron times.
These dregs of life! now the distemper'd mind
Has lost that concord of harmonious powers,
Which forms the soul of happiness; and all
Is off the poise within: the passions all
Have burst their bounds; and reason half extinct,
Or impotent, or else approving, sees
The foul disorder. Senseless, and deform'd,
Convulsive anger storms at large; or pale,
And silent, settles into fell revenge.
Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellence it cannot reach.
Desponding fear, of feeble fancies full,
Weak and unmanly, loosens every power.
E'en love itself is bitterness of soul,
A pensive anguish pining at the heart;
Or, sunk to sordid interest, feels no more
That noble wish, that never cloy'd desire,
Which, selfish joy disdaining, seeks alone
To bless the dearer object of its flame.
Hope sickens with extravagance; and grief,
Of life impatient, into madness swells;
Or in dead silence wastes the weeping hours.
These, and a thousand mixt emotions more,

From ever changing views of good and ill,
Form'd infinitely various, vex the mind
With endless storm: whence, deeply rankling, grows
The partial thought, a listless unconcern,
Cold, and averting from our neighbour's good;
Then dark disgust, and hatred, winding wiles,
Coward deceit, and ruffian violence:
At last, extinct each social feeling, fell
And joyless inhumanity pervades
And petrifies the heart. Nature disturb'd
Is deem'd vindictive, to have chang'd her course.
Hence, in old dusky time, a deluge came:
When the deep-cleft disparting orb, that arch'd
The central waters round, impetuous rush'd,
With universal burst, into the gulf,
And o'er the high-piled hills of fractured earth
Wide dash'd the waves, in undulation vast;
Till, from the centre to the streaming clouds,
A shoreless ocean tumbled round the globe.
The Seasons since have, with severer sway,
Oppress'd a broken world: the Winter keen
Shook forth his waste of snows; and Summer shot
His pestilential heats. Great Spring, before,
Green'd all the year; and fruits and blossoms blush'd,
In social sweetness, on the selfsame bough.
Pure was the temperate air; an even calm
Perpetual reign'd, save what the zephyrs bland

Breathed o'er the blue expanse: for then nor storms
Were taught to blow, nor hurricanes to rage;
Sound slept the waters; no sulphureous glooms
Swell'd in the sky, and sent the lightning forth;
While sickly damps and cold autumnal fogs
Hung not, relaxing, on the springs of life.
But now, of turbid elements the sport,
From clear to cloudy tost, from hot to cold,
And dry to moist, with inward-eating change,
Our drooping days are dwindled down to nought,
Their period finish'd ere 'tis well begun.
And yet the wholesome herb neglected dies;
Though with the pure exhilarating soul
Of nutriment and health, and vital powers,
Beyond the search of art, 'tis copious blest.
For, with hot ravine fired, ensanguined man
Is now become the lion of the plain,
And worse. The wolf, who from the nightly fold
Fierce drags the bleating prey, ne'er drunk her milk,
Nor wore her warming fleece: nor has the steer,
At whose strong chest the deadly tiger hangs,
E'er plough'd for him. They too are temper'd high,
With hunger stung and wild necessity;
Nor lodges pity in their shaggy breast.
But man, whom Nature form'd of milder clay,
With every kind emotion in his heart,
And taught alone to weep; while from her lap
She pours ten thousand delicacies, herbs,
And fruits, as numerous as the drops of rain

Or beams that gave them birth: shall he, fair form!
Who wears sweet smiles, and looks erect on Heaven,
E'er stoop to mingle with the prowling herd,
And dip his tongue in gore? The beast of prey,
Blood-stain'd, deserves to bleed: but you, ye flocks,
What have you done; ye peaceful people, what,
To merit death? you, who have given us milk
In luscious streams, and lent us your own coat
Against the Winter's cold? and the plain ox,
That harmless, honest, guileless animal,
In what has he offended? he, whose toil,
Patient and ever ready, clothes the land
With all the pomp of harvest; shall he bleed,
And struggling groan beneath the cruel hands
E'en of the clown he feeds? and that, perhaps,
To swell the riot of the autumnal feast,
Won by his labour? Thus the feeling heart
Would tenderly suggest: but 'tis enough,
In this late age, adventurous, to have touch'd
Light on the numbers of the Samian sage.
High Heaven forbids the bold presumptuous strain,
Whose wisest will has fix'd us in a state
That must not yet to pure perfection rise.

Now when the first foul torrent of the brooks,
Swell'd with the vernal rains, is ebb'd away,
And, whitening, down their mossy-tinctured stream
Descends the billowy foam: now is the time,
While yet the dark-brown water aids the guile,
To tempt the trout. The well-dissembled fly,

The rod fine-tapering with elastic spring,
Snatch'd from the hoary steed the floating line,
And all thy slender watry stores prepare.
But let not on thy hook the tortured worm,
Convulsive, twist in agonizing folds;
Which, by rapacious hunger swallow'd deep,
Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breast
Of the weak helpless uncomplaining wretch,
Harsh pain and horror to the tender hand.
When with his lively ray the potent sun
Has pierced the streams, and roused the finny-race,
Then, issuing cheerful, to thy sport repair;
Chief should the western breezes curling play,
And light o'er ether bear the shadowy clouds,
High to their fount, this day, amid the hills,
And woodlands warbling round, trace up the brooks;
The next, pursue their rocky-channel'd maze,
Down to the river, in whose ample wave
Their little naiads love to sport at large.
Just in the dubious point, where with the pool
Is mix'd the trembling stream, or where it boils
Around the stone, or from the hollow'd bank
Reverted plays in undulating flow,
There throw, nice-judging, the delusive fly;
And as you lead it round in artful curve,
With eye attentive mark the springing game.
Straight as above the surface of the flood

They wanton rise, or urged by hunger leap,
Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook:
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,
And to the shelving shore slow dragging some,
With various hand proportion'd to their force.
If yet too young, and easily deceived,
A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod,
Him, piteous of his youth and the short space
He has enjoy'd the vital light of Heaven,
Soft disengage, and back into the stream
The speckled captive throw. But should you lure
From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots
Of pendent trees, the monarch of the brook,
Behoves you then to ply your finest art.
Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly;
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.
At last, while haply o'er the shaded sun
Passes a cloud, he desperate takes the death,
With sullen plunge. At once he darts along,
Deep-struck, and runs out all the lengthened line;
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the sheltering weed,
The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode;
And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,
Indignant of the guile. With yielding hand,
That feels him still, yet to his furious course
Gives way, you, now retiring, following now
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage:

Till floating broad upon his breathless side,
And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore
You gaily drag your unresisting prize.
Thus pass the temperate hours; but when the sun
Shakes from his noon-day throne the scattering clouds,
Even shooting listless langour through the deeps;
Then seek the bank where flowering elders crowd,
Where scatter'd wild the lily of the vale
Its balmy essence breathes, where cowslips hang
The dewy head, where purple violets lurk,
With all the lowly children of the shade:
Or lie reclined beneath yon spreading ash,
Hung o'er the steep; whence, borne on liquid wing,
The sounding culver shoots; or where the hawk,
High, in the beetling cliff, his eyry builds.
There let the classic page thy fancy lead
Through rural scenes; such as the Mantuan swain
Paints in the matchless harmony of song.
Or catch thyself the landscape, gliding swift
Athwart imagination's vivid eye:
Or by the vocal woods and waters lull'd,
And lost in lonely musing, in the dream,
Confused, of careless solitude, where mix
Ten thousand wandering images of things,
Soothe every gust of passion into peace;
All but the swellings of the soften'd heart,
That waken, not disturb, the tranquil mind.

Behold yon breathing prospect bids the Muse

Throw all her beauty forth. But who can paint
Like Nature? Can imagination boast,
Amid its gay creation, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows? If fancy then
Unequal fails beneath the pleasing task,
Ah, what shall language do? Ah, where find words
Tinged with so many colours; and whose power,
To life approaching, may perfume my lays
With that fine oil, those aromatic gales,
That inexhaustive flow continual round?

Yet, though successless, will the toil delight.
Come then, ye virgins and ye youths, whose hearts
Have felt the raptures of refining love;
And thou, Amanda, come, pride of my song!
Form'd by the Graces, loveliness itself!
Come with those downcast eyes, sedate and sweet,
Those looks demure, that deeply pierce the soul,
Where, with the light of thoughtful reason mix'd,
Shines lively fancy and the feeling heart:
Oh come! and while the rosy-footed May
Steals blushing on, together let us tread
The morning dews, and gather in their prime
Fresh-blooming flowers, to grace thy braided hair,
And thy loved bosom that improves their sweets.

See, where the winding vale its lavish stores,
Irriguous, spreads. See, how the lily drinks
The latent rill, scarce oozing through the grass,

Of growth luxuriant; or the humid bank,
In fair profusion, decks. Long let us walk,
Where the breeze blows from yon extended field
Of blossom'd beans. Arabia cannot boast
A fuller gale of joy, than, liberal, thence
Breathes through the sense, and takes the ravished soul.
Nor is the mead unworthy of thy foot,
Full of fresh verdure, and unnumber'd flowers,
The negligence of Nature, wide, and wild;
Where, undisguised by mimic Art, she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye.
Here their delicious task the fervent bees,
In swarming millions, tend: around, athwart,
Through the soft air, the busy nations fly,
Cling to the bud, and, with inserted tube,
Suck its pure essence, its ethereal soul;
And oft, with bolder wing, they soaring dare
The purple heath, or where the wild thyme grows,
And yellow load them with the luscious spoil.
At length the finish'd garden to the view
Its vistas opens, and its alleys green.
Snatch'd through the verdant maze, the hurried eye
Distracted wanders; now the bowery walk
Of covert close, where scarce a speck of day
Falls on the lengthen'd gloom, protracted sweeps:
Now meets the bending sky; the river now
Dimpling along, the breezy ruffled lake,

The forest darkening round, the glittering spire,
The ethereal mountain, and the distant main.
But why so far excursive? when at hand,
Along these blushing borders, bright with dew,
And in yon mingled wilderness of flowers,
Fair-handed spring unbosoms every grace;
Throws out the snowdrop and the crocus first;
The daisy, primrose, violet darkly blue,
And polyanthus of unnumber'd dyes;
The yellow wall-flower, stain'd with iron brown;
And lavish stock that scents the garden round:
From the soft wing of vernal breezes shed,
Anemones; auriculas, enriched
With shining meal o'er all their velvet leaves;
And full ranunculas, of glowing red.
Then comes the tulip-race, where Beauty plays
Her idle freaks; from family diffused
To family, as flies the father-dust,
The varied colours run; and, while they break
On the charm'd eye, the exulting florist marks,
With secret pride, the wonders of his hand.
No gradual bloom is wanting; from the bud,
Firstborn of Spring, to Summer's musky tribes:
Nor hyacinths, of purest virgin white,
Low-bent, and blushing inward; nor jonquils,
Of potent fragrance; nor Narcissus fair,
As o'er the fabled fountain hanging still;
Nor broad carnations, nor gay-spotted pinks;
Nor, shower'd from every bush, the damask-rose.

Infinite numbers, delicacies, smells,
With hues on hues expression cannot paint,
The breath of Nature, and her endless bloom.
Hail, Source of Being! Universal Soul
Of Heaven and earth! Essential Presence, hail!
To Thee I bend the knee; to Thee my thoughts,
Continual, climb; who, with a master-hand,
Hast the great whole into perfection touched.
By Thee the various vegetative tribes,
Wrapt in a filmy net, and clad with leaves,
Draw the live ether, and imbibe the dew:
By Thee disposed into congenial soils,
Stands each attractive plant, and sucks, and swells
The juicy tide; a twining mass of tubes.
At Thy command the vernal sun awakes
The torpid sap, detruded to the root
By wintry winds; that now in fluent dance,
And lively fermentation, mounting, spreads
All this innumerous-colour'd scene of things.
As rising from the vegetable world
My theme ascends, with equal wing ascend,
My panting Muse; and hark, how loud the woods
Invite you forth in all your gayest trim.
Lend me your song, ye nightingales! oh, pour
The mazy-running soul of melody
Into my varied verse! while I deduce,
From the first note the hollow cuckoo sings,
The symphony of Spring, and touch a theme
Unknown to fame,—the passion of the groves.

When first the soul of love is sent abroad,
Warm through the vital air, and on the heart
Harmonious seizes, the gay troops begin,
In gallant thought, to plume the painted wing;
And try again the long-forgotten strain,
At first faint-warbled. But no sooner grows
The soft infusion prevalent, and wide,
Than, all alive, at once their joy o'erflows
In music unconfined. Up-springs the lark,
Shrill-voiced, and loud, the messenger of morn;
Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounted sings
Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
Deep-tangled, tree irregular, and bush
Bending with dewy moisture, o'er the heads
Of the coy quiristers that lodge within,
Are prodigal of harmony. The thrush
And wood-lark, o'er the kind-contending throng
Superior heard, run through the sweetest length
Of notes; when listening Philomela deigns
To let them joy, and purposes, in thought
Elate, to make her night excel their day.
The black-bird whistles from the thorny brake;
The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove:
Nor are the linnets, o'er the flowering furze
Pour'd out profusely, silent. Join'd to these
Innumerous songsters, in the freshening shade
Of new-sprung leaves, their modulations mix
Mellifluous. The jay, the rook, the daw,

And each harsh pipe, discordant heard alone,
Aid the full concert: while the stock-dove breathes
A melancholy murmur through the whole.
'Tis love creates their melody, and all
This waste of music is the voice of love;
That even to birds, and beasts, the tender arts
Of pleasing teaches. Hence the glossy kind
Try every winning way inventive love
Can dictate, and in courtship to their mates
Pour forth their little souls. First, wide around,
With distant awe, in airy rings they rove,
Endeavouring by a thousand tricks to catch
The cunning, conscious, half-averted glance
Of the regardless charmer. Should she seem
Softening the least approvance to bestow,
Their colours burnish, and by hope inspired,
They brisk advance; then, on a sudden struck,
Retire disorder'd; then again approach;
In fond rotation spread the spotted wing,
And shiver every feather with desire.
Connubial leagues agreed, to the deep woods
They haste away, all as their fancy leads,
Pleasure, or food, or secret safety prompts;
That Nature's great command may be obey'd:
Nor all the sweet sensations they perceive
Indulged in vain. Some to the holly-hedge
Nestling repair, and to the thicket some;
Some to the rude protection of the thorn
Commit their feeble offspring. The cleft tree

Offers its kind concealment to a few,
Their food its insects, and its moss their nests.
Others apart far in the grassy dale,
Or roughening waste, their humble texture weave.
But most in woodland solitudes delight,
In unfrequented glooms, or shaggy banks,
Steep, and divided by a babbling brook,
Whose murmurs soothe them all the live-long day,
When by kind duty fix'd. Among the roots
Of hazel, pendent o'er the plaintive stream,
They frame the first foundation of their domes;
Dry sprigs of trees, in artful fabric laid,
And bound with clay together. Now 'tis nought
But restless hurry through the busy air,
Beat by unnumber'd wings. The swallow sweeps
The slimy pool, to build his hanging house
Intent. And often, from the careless back
Of herds and flocks, a thousand tugging bills
Pluck hair and wool; and oft, when unobserved,
Steal from the barn a straw: till soft and warm,
Clean and complete, their habitation grows.

As thus the patient dam assiduous sits,
Not to be tempted from her tender task,
Or by sharp hunger, or by smooth delight,
Though the whole loosen'd Spring around her blows,
Her sympathizing lover takes his stand
High on the opponent bank, and ceaseless sings
The tedious time away; or else supplies

Her place a moment, while she sudden flits
To pick the scanty meal. The appointed time
With pious toil fulfill'd, the callow young,
Warm'd and expanded into perfect life,
Their brittle bondage break, and come to light,
A helpless family, demanding food
With constant clamour: O what passions then,
What melting sentiments of kindly care,
On the new parents seize! Away they fly
Affectionate, and undesiring bear
The most delicious morsel to their young;
Which equally distributed, again
The search begins. Even so a gentle pair,
By fortune sunk, but form'd of generous mould,
And charm'd with cares beyond the vulgar breast,
In some lone cot amid the distant woods,
Sustain'd alone by providential Heaven,
Oft, as they weeping eye their infant train,
Check their own appetites, and give them all.
Nor toil alone they scorn: exalting love,
By the great Father of the Spring inspired,
Gives instant courage to the fearful race,
And to the simple art. With stealthy wing,
Should some rude foot their woody haunts molest,
Amid a neighbouring bush they silent drop,
And whirring thence, as if alarm'd, deceive
The unfeeling schoolboy. Hence, around the head
Of wandering swain, the white-wing'd plover wheels
Her sounding flight, and then directly on

In long excursion skims the level lawn,
To tempt him from her nest. The wild-duck, hence,
O'er the rough moss, and o'er the trackless waste
The heath-hen flutters, pious fraud! to lead
The hot pursuing spaniel far astray.

Be not the Muse ashamed, here to bemoan
Her brothers of the grove, by tyrant Man
Inhuman caught, and in the narrow cage
From liberty confined, and boundless air.
Dull are the pretty slaves, their plumage dull,
Ragged, and all its brightening lustre lost;
Nor is that sprightly wildness in their notes,
Which, clear and vigorous, warbles from the beech.
O then, ye friends of love and love-taught song,
Spare the soft tribes, this barbarous art forbear;
If on your bosom innocence can win,
Music engage, or piety persuade.

But let not chief the nightingale lament
Her ruin'd care too delicately framed
To brook the harsh confinement of the cage.
Oft when, returning with her loaded bill,
The astonish'd mother finds a vacant nest,
By the hard hand of unrelenting clowns
Robb'd, to the ground the vain provision falls;
Her pinions ruffle, and low-drooping scarce
Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade;
Where, all abandon'd to despair, she sings
Her sorrows through the night; and, on the bough,
Sole-sitting, still at every dying fall

Takes up again her lamentable strain
Of winding woe; till, wide around, the woods
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.
But now the feather'd youth their former bounds,
Ardent, disdain; and, weighing oft their wings,
Demand the free possession of the sky:
This one glad office more, and then dissolves
Parental love at once, now needless grown.
Unlavish Wisdom never works in vain.
'Tis on some evening, sunny, grateful, mild,
When nought but balm is breathing through the woods,
With yellow lustre bright, that the new tribes
Visit the spacious heavens, and look abroad
On Nature's common, far as they can see,
Or wing, their range and pasture. O'er the boughs
Dancing about, still at the giddy verge
Their resolution fails; their pinions still,
In loose libration stretch'd, to trust the void
Trembling refuse: till down before them fly
The parent guides, and chide, exhort, command,
Or push them off. The surging air receives
Its plumy burden; and their self-taught wings
Winnow the waving element. On ground
Alighted, bolder up again they lead,
Farther and farther on, the lengthening flight;
Till vanish'd every fear, and every power
Roused into life and action, light in air

The acquitted parents see their soaring race,
And once rejoicing never know them more.
High from the summit of a craggy cliff,
Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frowns
On utmost Kilda's* shore, whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
The royal eagle draws his vigorous young,
Strong-pounced, and ardent with paternal fire.
Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own,
He drives them from his fort, the towering seat,
For ages, of his empire; which, in peace,
Unstain'd he holds, while many a league to sea
He wings his course, and preys in distant isles.
Should I my steps turn to the rural seat,
Whose lofty elms, and venerable oaks,
Invite the rook, who high amid the boughs,
In early Spring, his airy city builds,
And ceaseless caws amusive; there, well-pleased,
I might the various polity survey
Of the mix'd household kind. The careful hen
Calls all her chirping family around,
Fed and defended by the fearless cock;
Whose breast with ardour flames, as on he walks,
Graceful, and crows defiance. In the pond,
The finely checker'd duck, before her train,
Rows garrulous. The stately-sailing swan

* The farthest of the western islands of Scotland.

Gives out his snowy plumage to the gale;
And, arching proud his neck, with oary feet
Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier-isle,
Protective of his young. The turkey nigh,
Loud-threatening, reddens; while the peacock spreads
His every-colour'd glory to the sun,
And swims in radiant majesty along.
O'er the whole homely scene, the cooing dove
Flies thick in amorous chase, and wanton rolls
The glancing eye, and turns the changeful neck.
While thus the gentle tenants of the shade
Indulge their purer loves, the rougher world
Of brutes, below, rush furious into flame,
And fierce desire. Through all his lusty veins
The bull, deep-scorch'd, the raging passion feels.
Of pasture sick, and negligent of food,
Scarce seen, he wades among the yellow broom,
While o'er his ample sides the rambling spray
Luxuriant shoot; or through the mazy wood
Dejected wanders, nor the inticing bud
Crops, though it presses on his careless sense.
And oft, in jealous madening fancy wrapt,
He seeks the fight; and, idly-butting, feigns
His rival gored in every knotty trunk.
Him should he meet, the bellowing war begins:
Their eyes flash fury; to the hollow'd earth,
Whence the sand flies, they mutter bloody deeds,
And groaning deep, the impetuous battle mix:

While the fair heifer, balmy-breathing, near,
Stands kindling up their rage. The trembling steed,
With this hot impulse seized in every nerve,
Nor heeds the rein, nor hears the sounding thong;
Blows are not felt; but tossing high his head,
And by the well-known joy to distant plains
Attracted strong, all wild he bursts away;
O'er rocks, and woods, and craggy mountains flies;
And, neighing, on the aërial summit takes
The exciting gale; then, steep-descending, cleaves
The headlong torrents foaming down the hills,
E'en where the madness of the straiten'd stream
Turns in black eddies round: such is the force
With which his frantic heart and sinews swell.

Nor undelighted by the boundless Spring
Are the broad monsters of the foaming deep:
From the deep ooze and gelid cavern roused,
They flounce and tumble in unwieldy joy.
Dire were the strain, and dissonant to sing
The cruel raptures of the savage kind:
How by this flame their native wrath sublimed,
They roam, amid the fury of their heart,
The far-resounding waste in fiercer bands,
And growl their horrid loves. But this the theme
I sing, enraptured, to the British Fair,
Forbids, and leads me to the mountain-brow,
Where sits the shepherd on the grassy turf,
Inhaling, healthful, the descending sun.
Around him feeds his many-bleating flock,

Of various cadence; and his sportive lambs,
This way and that convolved, in friskful glee,
Their frolics play. And now the sprightly race
Invites them forth; when swift, the signal given,
They start away, and sweep the massy mound
That runs around the hill; the rampart once
Of iron war, in ancient barbarous times,
When disunited Britain ever bled,
Lost in eternal broil: ere yet she grew
To this deep-laid indissoluble state,
Where Wealth and Commerce lift their golden heads;
And o'er our labours, Liberty and Law,
Impartial, watch; the wonder of a world!
What is this mighty breath, ye sages, say,
That, in a powerful language, felt, not heard,
Instructs the fowls of Heaven; and through their breast
These arts of love diffuses? What, but God?
Inspiring God! who boundless Spirit all,
And unremitting Energy, pervades,
Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole.
He ceaseless works alone; and yet alone
Seems not to work: with such perfection framed
Is this complex stupendous scheme of things.
But, though conceal'd, to every purer eye
The informing Author in his works appears:
Chief, lovely Spring, in thee, and thy soft scenes,
The Smiling God is seen; while water, earth,

And air attest his bounty; which exalts
The brute creation to this finer thought,
And annual melts their undesigning hearts
Profusely thus in tenderness and joy.
Still let my song a nobler note assume,
And sing the infusive force of Spring on man;
When heaven and earth, as if contending, vie
To raise his being, and serene his soul.
Can he forbear to join the general smile
Of Nature? Can fierce passions vex his breast,
While every gale is peace, and every grove
Is melody? hence! from the bounteous walks
Of flowing Spring, ye sordid sons of earth,
Hard, and unfeeling of another's woe;
Or only lavish to yourselves; away!
But come, ye generous minds, in whose wide thought,
Of all his works, creative Bounty burns
With warmest beam; and on your open front
And liberal eye, sits, from his dark retreat
Inviting modest Want. Nor, till invoked,
Can restless goodness wait: your active search
Leaves no cold wintry corner unexplored;
Like silent-working Heaven, surprising oft
The lonely heart with unexpected good.
For you the roving spirit of the wind
Blows Spring abroad; for you the teeming clouds
Descend in gladsome plenty o'er the world;
And the sun sheds his kindest rays for you,

Ye flower of human race! in these green days,
Reviving Sickness lifts her languid head;
Life flows afresh; and young-eyed Health exalts
The whole creation round. Contentment walks
The sunny glade, and feels an inward bliss
Spring o'er his mind, beyond the power of kings
To purchase. Pure serenity apace
Induces thought, and contemplation still.
By swift degrees the love of Nature works,
And warms the bosom; till at last sublimed
To rapture, and enthusiastic heat,
We feel the present Deity, and taste
The joy of GOD to see a happy world!
These are the sacred feelings of thy heart,
Thy heart inform'd by reason's purer ray,
O Lyttelton, the friend! thy passions thus
And meditations vary, as at large,
Courting the Muse, through Hagley Park thou stray'st;
The British Tempé! there along the dale,
With woods o'erhung, and shagg'd with mossy rocks,
Whence on each hand the gushing waters play,
And down the rough cascade white-dashing fall,
Or gleam in lengthened vista through the trees,
You silent steal; or sit beneath the shade
Of solemn oaks, that tuft the swelling mounts
Thrown graceful round by Nature's careless hand,
And pensive listen to the various voice

Of rural peace: the herds, the flocks, the birds,
The hollow-whispering breeze, the plaint of rills,
That, purling down amid the twisted roots
Which creep around, their dewy murmurs shake
On the soothed ear. From these abstracted oft,
You wander through the philosophic world;
Where in bright train continual wonders rise,
Or to the curious or the pious eye.
And oft, conducted by historic truth,
You tread the long extent of backward time:
Planning, with warm benevolence of mind,
And honest zeal unwarp'd by party-rage,
Britannia's weal; how from the venal gulf
To raise her virtue, and her arts revive.
Or, turning thence thy view, these graver thoughts
The Muses charm: while, with sure taste refined,
You draw the inspiring breath of ancient song;
Till nobly rises, emulous, thy own.
Perhaps thy loved Lucinda shares thy walk,
With soul to thine attuned. Then Nature all
Wears to the lover's eye a look of love;
And all the tumult of a guilty world,
Tost by ungenerous passions, sinks away.
The tender heart is animated peace;
And as it pours its copious treasures forth,
In varied converse, softening every theme,
You, frequent-pausing, turn, and from her eyes,
Where meeken'd sense, and amiable grace,
And lively sweetness dwell, enraptured, drink

That nameless spirit of ethereal joy,
Unutterable happiness! which love,
Alone, bestows, and on a favour'd few.
Meantime you gain the height, from whose fair brow
The bursting prospect spreads immense around:
And snatch'd o'er hill and dale, and wood and lawn,
And verdant field, and darkening heath between,
And villages embosom'd soft in trees,
And spiry towns by surging columns mark'd
Of household smoke, your eye excursive roams:
Wide-stretching from the hall, in whose kind haunt
The Hospitable Genius lingers still,
To where the broken landscape, by degrees,
Ascending, roughens into rigid hills;
O'er which the Cambrian mountains, like far clouds
That skirt the blue horizon, dusky rise.
Flush'd by the spirit of the genial year,
Now from the virgin's cheek a fresher bloom
Shoots, less and less, the live carnation round;
Her lips blush deeper sweets; she breathes of youth;
The shining moisture swells into her eyes,
In brighter flow; her wishing bosom heaves,
With palpitations wild; kind tumults seize
Her veins, and all her yielding soul is love.
From the keen gaze her lover turns away,
Full of the dear ecstatic power, and sick
With sighing languishment. Ah then, ye fair!

Be greatly cautious of your sliding hearts:
Dare not the infectious sigh; the pleading look,
Down-cast and low, in meek submission dress'd,
But full of guile. Let not the fervent tongue,
Prompt to deceive, with adulation smooth,
Gain on your purposed will. Nor in the bower,
Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,
While Evening draws her crimson curtains round,
Trust your soft minutes with betraying Man.

And let the aspiring youth beware of love,
Of the smooth glance beware; for 'tis too late,
When on his heart the torrent-softness pours;
Then wisdom prostrate lies, and fading fame
Dissolves in air away; while the fond soul,
Wrapp'd in gay visions of unreal bliss,
Still paints the illusive form; the kindling grace;
The inticing smile; the modest-seeming eye,
Beneath whose beauteous beams, belying Heaven,
Lurk searchless cunning, cruelty, and death:
And still false-warbling in his cheated ear,
Her siren voice, enchanting, draws him on
To guileful shores, and meads of fatal joy.

E'en present, in the very lap of love
Inglorious laid; while music flows around,
Perfumes, and oils, and wine, and wanton hours;
Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
Her snaky crest: a quick returning pang
Shoots through the conscious heart; where honour still,

And great design, against the oppressive load
Of luxury, by fits, impatient heave.
But absent, what fantastic woes, aroused,
Rage in each thought, by restless musing fed,
Chill the warm cheek, and blast the bloom of life?
Neglected fortune flies; and sliding swift,
Prone into ruin fall his scorn'd affairs.
'Tis nought but gloom around: the darken'd sun
Loses his light. The rosy-bosom'd Spring
To weeping fancy pines; and yon bright arch,
Contracted, bends into a dusky vault.
All Nature fades extinct: and she alone,
Heard, felt, and seen, possesses every thought,
Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.
Books are but formal dulness, tedious friends;
And sad amid the social band he sits,
Lonely, and unattentive. From his tongue
The unfinish'd period falls: while borne away
On swelling thought, his wafted spirit flies
To the vain bosom of his distant fair;
And leaves the semblance of a lover, fix'd
In melancholy site, with head declined,
And love-dejected eyes. Sudden he starts,
Shook from his tender trance, and restless runs
To glimmering shades, and sympathetic glooms;
Where the dun umbrage o'er the falling stream,
Romantic, hangs; there through the pensive dusk
Strays, in heart-thrilling meditation lost,
Indulging all to love: or on the bank

Thrown, amid drooping lilies, swells the breeze
With sighs unceasing, and the brook with tears.
Thus in soft anguish he consumes the day,
Nor quits his deep retirement, till the Moon
Peeps through the chambers of the fleecy east,
Enlightened by degrees, and in her train
Leads on the gentle Hours; then forth he walks,
Beneath the trembling languish of her beam,
With soften'd soul, and woos the bird of eve
To mingle woes with his: or, while the world
And all the sons of Care lie hush'd in sleep,
Associates with the midnight shadows drear;
And, sighing to the lonely taper, pours
His idly-tortured heart into the page,
Meant for the moving messenger of love;
Where rapture burns on rapture, every line
With rising frenzy fired. But if on bed
Delirious flung, sleep from his pillow flies.
All night he tosses, nor the balmy power
In any posture finds; till the grey Morn
Lifts her pale lustre on the paler wretch,
Exanimate by love: and then perhaps
Exhausted Nature sinks a while to rest,
Still interrupted by distracted dreams,
That o'er the sick imagination rise,
And in black colours paint the mimic scene.
Oft with the enchantress of his soul he talks;
Sometimes in crowds distress'd; or if retired
To secret winding flower-enwoven bowers,

Far from the dull impertinence of Man,
Just as he, credulous, his endless cares
Begins to lose in blind oblivious love,
Snatch'd from her yielded hand, he knows not how,
Through forests huge, and long untravel'd heaths
With desolation brown, he wanders waste,
In night and tempest wrapp'd : or shrinks aghast,
Back, from the bending precipice ; or wades
The turbid stream below, and strives to reach
The farther shore ; where succourless, and sad,
She with extended arms his aid implores ;
But strives in vain ; borne by the outrageous flood
To distance down, he rides the ridgy wave,
Or whelm'd beneath the boiling eddy sinks.
  These are the charming agonies of love,
Whose misery delights. But through the heart
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
'Tis then delightful misery no more,
But agony unmix'd incessant gall,
Coroding every thought, and blasting all
Love's paradise. Ye fairy prospects, then,
Ye beds of roses, and ye bowers of joy,
Farewell ! ye gleamings of departed peace,
Shine out your last ! the yellow-tinging plague
Internal vision taints, and in a night
Of livid gloom imagination wraps.
Ah then ! instead of love-enliven'd cheeks,
Of sunny features, and of ardent eyes

With flowing rapture bright, dark looks succeed,
Suffused and glaring with untender fire;
A clouded aspect, and a burning cheek,
Where the whole poison'd soul, malignant, sits,
And frightens love away. Ten thousand fears
Invented wild, ten thousand frantic views
Of horrid rivals, hanging on the charms
For which he melts in fondness, eat him up
With fervent anguish, and consuming rage.
In vain reproaches lend their idle aid,
Deceitful pride, and resolution frail,
Giving false peace a moment. Fancy pours,
Afresh, her beauties on his busy thought,
Her first endearments twining round the soul,
With all the witchcraft of ensnaring love.
Straight the fierce storm involves his mind anew,
Flames through the nerves, and boils along the veins;
While anxious doubt distracts the tortured heart:
For e'en the sad assurance of his fears
Were ease to what he feels. Thus the warm youth,
Whom love deludes into his thorny wilds,
Through flowery tempting paths, or leads a life
Of fever'd rapture or of cruel care;
His brightest aims extinguish'd all, and all
His lively moments running down to waste.
But happy they! the happiest of their kind!
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate

Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft and foreign to the mind,
That binds their peace, but harmony itself,
Attuning all their passions into love;
Where friendship full-exerts her softest power,
Perfect esteem enliven'd by desire
Ineffable, and sympathy of soul;
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
With boundless confidence: for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.
Let him, ungenerous, who, alone intent
To bless himself, from sordid parents buys
The loathing virgin, in eternal care,
Well-merited, consume his nights and days:
Let barbarous nations, whose inhuman love
Is wild desire, fierce as the suns they feel;
Let eastern tyrants, from the light of Heaven,
Seclude their bosom-slaves, meanly possess'd
Of a mere lifeless, violated form:
While those whom love cements in holy faith,
And equal transport, free as Nature live,
Disdaining fear. What is the world to them,
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all?
Who in each other clasp whatever fair
High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish;
Something than beauty dearer, should they look
Or on the mind, or mind-illumined face;

Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love,
The richest bounty of indulgent Heaven.
Meantime a smiling offspring rises round,
And mingles both their graces. By degrees,
The human blossom blows; and every day,
Soft as it rolls along, shows some new charm,
The father's lustre, and the mother's bloom.
Then infant reason grows apace, and calls
For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast.
Oh, speak the joy! ye, whom the sudden tear
Surprises often, while you look around,
And nothing strikes your eye but sights of bliss,
All various Nature pressing on the heart:
An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven!
These are the matchless joys of virtuous love;
And thus their moments fly. The Seasons thus,
As ceaseless round a jarring world they roll,
Still find them happy; and consenting Spring
Sheds her own rosy garland on their heads:
Till evening comes at last, serene and mild;

When after the long vernal day of life,
Enamour'd more, as more remembrance swells
With many a proof of recollected love,
Together down they sink in social sleep;
Together freed, their gentle spirits fly
To scenes where love and bliss immortal reign.

SUMMER.

Jam clarus occultum Andromedæ pater
Ostendit ignem : jam Procyon furit,
  Et stella vesani Leonis,
    Sole dies referente siccos.
Jam pastor umbras cum grege languido,
Rivumque fessus quærit, et horridi
  Dumeta Sylvani : caretque
    Ripa vagis taciturna ventis.

HOR.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

MR. DODINGTON,

ONE OF THE LORDS OF HIS MAJESTY'S

TREASURY, ETC.

SIR,

It is not my purpose, in this address, to run into the common tract of dedicators, and attempt a panegyric which would prove ungrateful to you, too arduous for me, and superfluous with regard to the world. To you it would prove ungrateful, since there is a certain generous delicacy in men of the most distinguished merit, disposing them to avoid those praises they so powerfully attract. And when I consider that a character in which the virtues, the graces, and the muses join their influence as much exceeds the expression of the most elegant and judicious pen, as the finished beauty does the representation of the pencil, I have the best reasons for declining such an arduous undertaking. As, indeed, it would be super-

fluous in itself; for what reader need to be told of those great abilities in the management of public affairs, and those amiable accomplishments in private life, which you so eminently possess. The general voice is loud in the praise of so many virtues, though posterity alone will do them justice. But may you, Sir, live long to illustrate your own fame by your own actions, and by them be transmitted to future times as the British Mæcenas!

Your example has recommended poetry with the greatest grace to the admiration of those who are engaged in the highest and most active scenes of life: and this, though confessedly the least considerable of those exalted qualities that dignify your character, must be particularly pleasing to one whose only hope of being introduced to your regard is through the recommendation of an art in which you are a master. But I forget what I have been declaring above; and must, therefore, turn my eyes to the following sheets. I am not ignorant that, when offered to your perusal, they are put into the hands of one of the finest and, consequently, the most indulgent judges of the age: but, as there is no mediocrity in poetry, so there should be no limits to its ambition. I venture directly on the trial of my

fame. If what I here present you has any merit to gain your approbation, I am not afraid of its success; and if it fails of your notice, I give it up to its just fate. This advantage, at least, I secure to myself, an occasion of thus publicly declaring that I am, with the profoundest veneration,

SIR,

Your most devoted

humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

SUMMER.

ARGUMENT.

The subject proposed. Invocation. Address to Mr. Doddington. An introductory reflection on the motion of the Heavenly Bodies; whence the succession of the Seasons. As the face of Nature in this season is almost uniform, the progress of the poem is a description of a Summer's Day. The Dawn. Sunrising. Hymn to the Sun. Forenoon. Summer Insects described. Haymaking. Sheepshearing. Noonday. A Woodland Retreat. Group of Herds and Flocks. A solemn Grove: how it affects a contemplative mind. A Cataract, and rude scene. View of Summer in the torrid zone. Storm of thunder and lightning. A Tale. The Storm over. A serene Afternoon. Bathing. Hour of Walking. Transition to the prospect of a rich, well cultivated Country; which introduces a panegyric on Great Britain. Sunset. Evening. Night. Summer Meteors. A Comet. The whole concluding with the praise of Philosophy.

SUMMER.

From brightening fields of ether fair disclosed,
Child of the Sun, refulgent Summer comes,
In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth:
He comes attended by the sultry Hours,
And ever fanning breezes, on his way;
While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring
Averts her blushful face; and earth, and skies,
All-smiling, to his hot dominion leaves.
  Hence, let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
Where scarce a sunbeam wanders through the gloom;
And on the dark-green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
And sing the glories of the circling year.
  Come, Inspiration! from thy hermit-seat,
By mortal seldom found: may Fancy dare,

From thy fix'd serious eye, and raptured glance
Shot on surrounding Heaven, to steal one look
Creative of the Poet, every power
Exalting to an ecstasy of soul.
And thou, my youthful Muse's early friend,
In whom the human graces all unite:
Pure light of mind, and tenderness of heart;
Genius, and wisdom; the gay social sense,
By decency chastised; goodness and wit,
In seldom-meeting harmony combined;
Unblemish'd honour, and an active zeal
For Britain's glory, liberty, and Man:
O Dodington! attend my rural song,
Stoop to my theme, inspirit every line,
And teach me to deserve thy just applause.
With what an awful world-revolving power
Were first the unwieldy planets launch'd along
The illimitable void! thus to remain,
Amid the flux of many thousand years,
That oft has swept the toiling race of men,
And all their labour'd monuments away,
Firm, unremitting, matchless, in their course;
To the kind-temper'd change of night and day,
And of the seasons ever stealing round,
Minutely faithful: such the All-perfect hand!
That poised, impels, and rules the steady whole.
When now no more the alternate Twins are fired,
And Cancer reddens with the solar blaze,

Short is the doubtful empire of the night;
And soon, observant of approaching day,
The meek'd-eyed Morn appears, mother of dews,
At first faint-gleaming in the dappled east:
Till far o'er ether spreads the widening glow;
And, from before the lustre of her face,
White break the clouds away. With quicken'd step,
Brown Night retires: young Day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny prospect wide.
The dripping rock, the mountain's misty top
Swell on the sight, and brighten with the dawn.
Blue, through the dusk, the smoking currents shine;
And from the bladed field the fearful hare
Limps, awkward: while along the forest-glade
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early passenger. Music awakes
The native voice of undissembled joy;
And thick around the woodland hymns arise.
Roused by the cock, the soon-clad shepherd leaves
His mossy cottage, where with Peace he dwells;
And from the crowded fold, in order, drives
His flock, to taste the verdure of the morn.
Falsely luxurious! will not Man awake;
And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy
The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour,
To meditation due and sacred song?
For is there ought in sleep can charm the wise?

To lie in dead oblivion, losing half
The fleeting moments of too short a life;
Total extinction of the enlightened soul!
Or else to feverish vanity alive,
Wilder'd, and tossing through distemper'd dreams?
Who would in such a gloomy state remain
Longer than Nature craves; when every Muse
And every blooming pleasure wait without,
To bless the wildly-devious morning-walk?

But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad. Lo! now, apparent all,
Aslant the dew-bright earth, and colour'd air,
He looks in boundless majesty abroad;
And sheds the shining day, that burnish'd plays
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
High gleaming from afar. Prime cheerer, Light!
Of all material beings first, and best!
Efflux divine! Nature's resplendent robe!
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In unessential gloom; and thou, O Sun!
Soul of surrounding worlds! in whom best seen
Shines out thy Maker! may I sing of thee?

'Tis by thy secret, strong, attractive force,
As with a chain indissoluble bound,

Thy system rolls entire: from the far bourne
Of utmost Saturn, wheeling wide his round
Of thirty years, to Mercury, whose disk
Can scarce be caught by philosophic eye,
Lost in the near effulgence of thy blaze.
  Informer of the planetary train!
Without whose quickening glance their cumbrous orbs
Were brute unlovely mass, inert and dead,
And not, as now, the green abodes of life!
How many forms of being wait on thee!
Inhaling spirit; from the unfetter'd mind,
By thee sublimed, down to the daily race,
The mixing myriads of thy setting beam.
  The vegetable world is also thine,
Parent of Seasons! who the pomp precede
That waits thy throne, as through thy vast domain,
Annual, along the bright ecliptic road,
In world-rejoicing state, it moves sublime.
Meantime the expecting nations, circled gay
With all the various tribes of foodful earth,
Implore thy bounty, or send grateful up
A common hymn: while, round thy beaming car,
High-seen, the Seasons lead, in sprightly dance
Harmonious knit, the rosy-finger'd Hours,
The Zephyrs floating loose, the timely Rains,
Of bloom ethereal the light-footed Dews,
And softened into joy the surly Storms.
These, in successive turn, with lavish hand,

Shower every beauty, every fragrance shower,
Herbs, flowers, and fruits; and, kindling at thy touch,
From land to land is flush'd the vernal year.
Nor to the surface of enliven'd earth,
Graceful with hills and dales, and leafy woods,
Her liberal tresses, is thy force confined:
But, to the bowel'd cavern darting deep,
The mineral kinds confess thy mighty power.
Effulgent, hence the veiny marble shines;
Hence Labour draws his tools; hence burnish'd War
Gleams on the day; the nobler works of Peace
Hence bless mankind, and generous Commerce binds
The round of nations in a golden chain.
The unfruitful rock itself, impregn'd by thee,
In dark retirement forms the lucid stone.
The lively diamond drinks thy purest rays,
Collected light, compact; that, polish'd bright,
And all its native lustre let abroad,
Dares, as it sparkles on the fair-one's breast,
With vain ambition emulate her eyes.
At thee the ruby lights its deepening glow,
And with a waving radiance inward flames.
From thee the sapphire, solid ether, takes
Its hue cerulean; and, of evening tinct,
The purple-streaming amethyst is thine.
With thy own smile the yellow topaz burns.

Nor deeper verdure dyes the robe of Spring,
When first she gives it to the southern gale,
Than the green emerald shows. But, all combined,
Thick through the whitening opal play thy beams;
Or, flying several from its surface, form
A trembling variance of revolving hues,
As the site varies in the gazer's hand.

The very dead creation, from thy touch,
Assumes a mimic life. By thee refined,
In brighter mazes the relucent stream
Plays o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
Projecting horror on the blacken'd flood,
Softens at thy return. The desert joys,
Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds.
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
Seen from some pointed promontory's top,
Far to the blue horizon's utmost verge,
Restless, reflects a floating gleam. But this,
And all the much-transported Muse can sing,
Are to thy beauty, dignity, and use,
Unequal far; great delegated source
Of light, and life, and grace, and joy below!

How shall I then attempt to sing of HIM!
Who, Light Himself, in uncreated light
Invested deep, dwells awfully retired
From mortal eye, or angel's purer ken;
Whose single smile has, from the first of time,
Fill'd, overflowing, all those lamps of Heaven,
That beam for ever through the boundless sky:

But, should he hide his face, the astonish'd sun,
And all the extinguish'd stars, would loosening reel
Wide from their spheres, and Chaos come again.
And yet was every faltering tongue of Man,
ALMIGHTY FATHER! silent in thy praise;
Thy Works themselves would raise a general voice,
E'en in the depth of solitary woods
By human foot untrod; proclaim thy power,
And to the quire celestial THEE resound,
The eternal cause, support, and end of all!
To me be Nature's volume broad display'd;
And to peruse its all instructing page,
Or, haply catching inspiration thence,
Some easy passage, raptured, to translate,
My sole delight; as through the falling glooms
Pensive I stray, or with the rising dawn
On Fancy's eagle-wing excursive soar.
Now, flaming up the heavens, the potent sun
Melts into limpid air the high-raised clouds,
And morning fogs, that hover'd round the hills
In party-colour'd bands; till wide unveil'd
The face of Nature shines, from where earth seems,
Far-stretch'd around, to meet the bending sphere.
Half in a blush of clustering roses lost,
Dew-dropping Coolness to the shade retires;
There, on the verdant turf, or flowery bed,
By gelid founts and careless rills to muse;
While tyrant Heat, dispreading through the sky,

With rapid sway, his burning influence darts
On man, and beast, and herb, and tepid stream.
Who can unpitying see the flowery race,
Shed by the morn, their new-flush'd bloom resign,
Before the parching beam? so fade the fair,
When fevers revel through their azure veins.
But one the lofty follower of the sun,
Sad when he sets, shuts up her yellow leaves,
Drooping all night; and, when he warm returns,
Points her enamour'd bosom to his ray.
Home, from his morning task, the swain retreats;
His flock before him stepping to the fold:
While the full-udder'd mother lows around
The cheerful cottage, then expecting food,
The food of innocence and health! the daw,
The rook, and magpie, to the grey-grown oaks
That the calm village in their verdant arms,
Sheltering, embrace, direct their lazy flight;
Where on the mingling boughs they sit embower'd,
All the hot noon, till cooler hours arise.
Faint, underneath, the household fowls convene;
And, in a corner of the buzzing shade,
The house-dog, with the vacant greyhound, lies,
Out-stretch'd, and sleepy. In his slumbers one
Attacks the nightly thief, and one exults
O'er hill and dale; till, waken'd by the wasp,
They starting snap. Nor shall the Muse disdain
To let the little noisy summer race
Live in her lay, and flutter through her song:

Not mean though simple; to the sun ally'd,
From him they draw their animating fire.
Waked by his warmer ray, the reptile young
Come wing'd abroad; by the light air upborne,
Lighter, and full of soul. From every chink
And secret corner, where they slept away
The wintry storms; or rising from their tombs,
To higher life; by myriads, forth at once,
Swarming they pour; of all the varied hues
Their beauty-beaming parent can disclose.
Ten thousand forms, ten thousand different tribes,
People the blaze. To sunny waters some
By fatal instinct fly; where on the pool
They, sportive, wheel: or, sailing down the stream,
Are snatch'd immediate by the quick-eyed trout,
Or darting salmon. Through the green-wood glade
Some love to stray; there lodged, amused, and fed,
In the fresh leaf. Luxurious, others make
The meads their choice, and visit every flower,
And every latent herb: for the sweet task,
To propagate their kinds, and where to wrap,
In what soft beds, their young yet undisclosed,
Employs their tender care. Some to the house,
The fold, and dairy, hungry bend their flight;
Sip round the pail, or taste the curdling cheese;
Oft, inadvertent, from the milky stream
They meet their fate; or, weltering in the bowl,
With powerless wings around them wrapt, expire.
But chief to heedless flies the window proves

A constant death; where, gloomily retired,
The villain spider lives, cunning, and fierce,
Mixture abhorr'd! amid a mangled heap
Of carcasses, in eager watch he sits,
O'erlooking all his waving snares around.
Near the dire cell the dreadless wanderer oft
Passes, as oft the ruffian shows his front;
The prey at last ensnared, he dreadful darts,
With rapid glide, along the leaning line;
And, fixing in the wretch his cruel fangs,
Strikes backward grimly pleased; the fluttering wing
And shriller sound declare extreme distress,
And ask the helping hospitable hand.
  Resounds the living surface of the ground:
Nor undelightful is the ceaseless hum,
To him who muses through the woods at noon;
Or drowsy shepherd, as he lies reclined,
With half-shut eyes, beneath the floating shade
Of willows grey, close crowding o'er the brook.
  Gradual, from these what numerous kinds descend,
Evading e'en the microscopic eye?
Full Nature swarms with life; one wondrous mass
Of animals, or atoms organized,
Waiting the vital breath, when parent Heaven
Shall bid his spirit blow. The hoary fen,
In putrid steams, emits the living cloud
Of pestilence. Through subterranean cells,

Where searching sunbeams scarce can find a way,
Earth animated heaves. The flowery leaf
Wants not its soft inhabitants. Secure,
Within its winding citadel, the stone
Holds multitudes. But chief the forest boughs,
That dance unnumber'd to the playful breeze,
The downy orchard, and the melting pulp
Of mellow fruit, the nameless nations feed
Of evanescent insects. Where the pool
Stands mantled o'er with green, invisible,
Amid the floating verdure millions stray.
Each liquid too, whether it pierces, soothes,
Inflames, refreshes, or exalts the taste,
With various forms abounds. Nor is the stream
Of purest crystal, nor the lucid air,
Though one transparent vacancy it seems,
Void of their unseen people. These, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming Heaven, escape
The grosser eye of man: for, if the worlds
In worlds inclosed should on his senses burst,
From cates ambrosial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He would abhorrent turn; and in dead night,
When silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.
Let no presuming impious railer tax
Creative Wisdom, as if ought was form'd
In vain, or not for admirable ends.
Shall little haughty Ignorance pronounce
His works unwise, of which the smallest part
Exceeds the narrow vision of her mind?

As if upon a full proportion'd dome,
On swelling columns heaved, the pride of art!
A critic fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads
An inch around, with blind presumption bold,
Should dare to tax the structure of the whole.
And lives the man, whose universal eye
Has swept at once the unbounded scheme of things;
Mark'd their dependance so, and firm accord,
As with unfaltering accent to conclude
That this availeth nought? Has any seen
The mighty chain of beings, lessening down
From Infinite Perfection to the brink
Of dreary nothing, desolate abyss!
From which astonish'd thought, recoiling, turns?
Till then alone let zealous praise ascend,
And hymns of holy wonder, to that Power,
Whose wisdom shines as lovely on our minds,
As on our smiling eyes his servant-sun.

Thick in yon stream of light, a thousand ways,
Upward, and downward, thwarting, and convolved,
The quivering nations sport; till, tempest-wing'd,
Fierce Winter sweeps them from the face of day.
E'en so luxurious men, unheeding, pass
An idle summer life in fortune's shine,
A season's glitter! thus they flutter on
From toy to toy, from vanity to vice;
Till, blown away by death, oblivion comes
Behind, and strikes them from the book of life.

Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead:

The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
Healthful and strong; full as the summer-rose
Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,
Half naked, swelling on the sight, and all
Her kindled graces burning o'er her cheek.
E'en stooping age is here; and infant hands
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll.
Wide flies the tedded grain; all in a row
Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
They spread the breathing harvest to the sun,
That throws refreshful round a rural smell:
Or, as they rake the green-appearing ground,
And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
The russet hay-cock rises thick behind,
In order gay. While heard from dale to dale,
Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
Of happy labour, love, and social glee.

Or rushing thence, in one diffusive band,
They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
Compell'd, to where the mazy-running brook
Forms a deep pool; this bank abrupt and high,
And that fair-spreading in a pebbled shore.
Urged to the giddy brink, much is the toil,
The clamour much, of men, and boys, and dogs,
Ere the soft fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in:
Embolden'd then, nor hesitating more,

Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And panting labour to the farthest shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-wash'd fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt,
The trout is banish'd by the sordid stream;
Heavy, and dripping, to the breezy brow
Slow move the harmless race: where, as they spread
Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturb'd, and wondering what this wild
Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
The country fill; and, toss'd from rock to rock,
Incessant bleatings run around the hills.
At last, of snowy white, the gather'd flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerous press'd,
Head above head: and ranged in lusty rows
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.
The housewife waits to roll her fleecy stores,
With all her gay-drest maids attending round.
One, chief, in gracious dignity enthroned,
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and rays
Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd-king;
While the glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth, and wit that knows no gall.
Meantime, their joyous task goes on apace:
Some mingling stir the melted tar, and some,
Deep on the new-shorn vagrant's heaving side,
To stamp the master's cypher ready stand;
Others the unwilling wether drag along;
And, glorying in his might, the sturdy boy

Holds by the twisted horns the indignant ram.
Behold where bound, and of its robe bereft,
By needy man, that all-depending lord,
How meek, how patient, the mild creature lies!
What softness in its melancholy face,
What dumb complaining innocence appears!
Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife
Of horrid slaughter that is o'er you waved;
No, 'tis the tender swain's well-guided shears,
Who having now, to pay his annual care,
Borrow'd your fleece, to you a cumbrous load,
Will send you bounding to your hills again.

A simple scene! yet hence Britannia sees
Her solid grandeur rise: hence she commands
The exalted stores of every brighter clime,
The treasures of the Sun without his rage:
Hence, fervent all, with culture, toil, and arts,
Wide glows her land: her dreadful thunder hence
Rides o'er the waves sublime, and now, e'en now,
Impending hangs o'er Gallia's humbled coast;
Hence rules the circling deep, and awes the world.

'Tis raging noon; and, vertical, the sun
Darts on the head direct his forceful rays.
O'er heaven and earth, far as the ranging eye
Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns; and all
From pole to pole is undistinguish'd blaze.
In vain the sight, dejected, to the ground
Stoops for relief; thence hot-ascending steams
And keen reflection pain. Deep to the root

Of vegetation parch'd, the cleaving fields
And slippery lawn an arid hue disclose,
Blast Fancy's bloom, and wither e'en the soul.
Echo no more returns the cheerful sound
Of sharpening scythe: the mower sinking heaps
O'er him the humid hay, with flowers perfumed;
And scarce a chirping grasshopper is heard
Through the dumb mead. Distressful Nature pants.
The very streams look languid from afar;
Or, through the unshelter'd glade, impatient, seem
To hurl into the covert of the grove.

All-conquering Heat, oh intermit thy wrath!
And on my throbbing temples potent thus
Beam not so fierce! incessant still you flow,
And still another fervent flood succeeds,
Pour'd on the head profuse. In vain I sigh,
And restless turn, and look around for night;
Night is far off; and hotter hours approach.
Thrice happy he! who on the sunless side
Of a romantic mountain, forest-crown'd,
Beneath the whole collected shade reclines:
Or in the gelid caverns, woodbine-wrought,
And fresh bedew'd with ever-spouting streams,
Sits coolly calm; while all the world without,
Unsatisfied, and sick, tosses in noon.
Emblem instructive of the virtuous man,
Who keeps his temper'd mind serene and pure,
And every passion aptly harmonized,
Amid a jarring world with vice inflamed.

Welcome, ye shades! ye bowery thickets, hail!
Ye lofty pines! ye venerable oaks!
Ye ashes wild, resounding o'er the steep!
Delicious is your shelter to the soul,
As to the hunted hart the sallying spring,
Or stream full-flowing, that his swelling sides
Laves, as he floats along the herbaged brink.
Cool, through the nerves, your pleasing comfort glides;
The heart beats glad; the fresh-expanded eye
And ear resume their watch; the sinews knit;
And life shoots swift through all the lighten'd limbs.

Around the adjoining brook, that purls along
The vocal grove, now fretting o'er a rock,
Now scarcely moving through a reedy pool,
Now starting to a sudden stream, and now
Gently diffused into a limpid plain;
A various group the herds and flocks compose,
Rural confusion! on the grassy bank
Some ruminating lie; while others stand
Half in the flood, and often bending sip
The circling surface. In the middle droops
The strong laborious ox, of honest front,
Which incomposed he shakes; and from his sides
The troublous insects lashes with his tail,
Returning still. Amid his subjects safe,
Slumbers the monarch-swain; his careless arm
Thrown round his head, on downy moss sustain'd;
Here laid his scrip, with wholesome viands fill'd;

There, listening every noise, his watchful dog.
Light fly his slumbers, if perchance a flight
Of angry gad-flies fasten on the herd;
That startling scatters from the shallow brook,
In search of lavish stream. Tossing the foam,
They scorn the keeper's voice, and scour the plain,
Through all the bright severity of noon;
While, from their labouring breasts, a hollow moan
Proceeding, runs low-bellowing round the hills.
Oft in this season too the horse, provoked,
While his big sinews full of spirits swell,
Trembling with vigour, in the heat of blood,
Springs the high fence; and, o'er the field effused,
Darts on the gloomy flood, with steadfast eye,
And heart estranged to fear: his nervous chest,
Luxuriant, and erect, the seat of strength!
Bears down the opposing stream: quenchless his thirst;
He takes the river at redoubled draughts;
And with wide nostrils, snorting, skims the wave.
Still let me pierce into the midnight depth
Of yonder grove, of wildest largest growth:
That, forming high in air a woodland quire,
Nods o'er the mount beneath. At every step,
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fall,
And all is awful listening gloom around.
These are the haunts of Meditation, these
The scenes where ancient bards the inspiring breath,
Ecstatic, felt; and, from this world retired,

Conversed with angels, and immortal forms,
On gracious errands bent: to save the fall
Of virtue struggling on the brink of vice;
In waking whispers, and repeated dreams,
To hint pure thought, and warn the favour'd soul
For future trials fated to prepare;
To prompt the poet, who devoted gives
His muse to better themes; to soothe the pangs
Of dying worth, and from the patriot's breast
(Backward to mingle in detested war,
But foremost when engaged) to turn the death;
And numberless such offices of love,
Daily, and nightly, zealous to perform.
Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky,
A thousand shapes or glide athwart the dusk,
Or stalk majestic on. Deep-roused, I feel
A sacred terror, a severe delight,
Creep through my mortal frame; and thus, me-
thinks,
A voice than human more, the abstracted ear
Of fancy strikes:—"Be not of us afraid,
Poor kindred man! thy fellow-creatures, we
From the same Parent-Power our beings drew,
The same our Lord, and laws, and great pursuit.
Once some of us, like thee, through stormy life,
Toil'd, tempest-beaten, ere we could attain
This holy calm, this harmony of mind,
Where purity and peace immingle charms.
Then fear not us; but with responsive song,

Amid these dim recesses, undisturb'd
By noisy folly and discordant vice,
Of Nature sing with us, and Nature's God.
Here frequent, at the visionary hour,
When musing midnight reigns or silent noon,
Angelic harps are in full concert heard,
And voices chanting from the wood-crown'd hill,
The deepening dale, or inmost sylvan glade:
A privilege bestow'd by us, alone,
On Contemplation, or the hallow'd ear
Of poet, swelling to seraphic strain."
And art thou, Stanley,* of that sacred band?
Alas, for us too soon! though raised above
The reach of human pain, above the flight
Of human joy; yet, with a mingled ray
Of sadly pleased remembrance, must thou feel
A mother's love, a mother's tender woe:
Who seeks thee still, in many a former scene;
Seeks thy fair form, thy lovely beaming eyes,
Thy pleasing converse, by gay lively sense
Inspired: where moral wisdom mildly shone,
Without the toil of art; and virtue glow'd,
In all her smiles, without forbidding pride.
But, O thou best of parents! wipe thy tears;
Or rather to Parental Nature pay
The tears of grateful joy, who for a while
Lent thee this younger self, this opening bloom

* A young lady, who died at the age of eighteen, in the year 1738, upon whom Thomson wrote an Epitaph.

Of thy enlighten'd mind and gentle worth.
Believe the Muse: the wintry blast of death
Kills not the buds of virtue; no, they spread,
Beneath the heavenly beam of brighter suns,
Through endless ages, into higher powers.
Thus up the mount, in airy vision wrapt,
I stray, regardless whither; till the sound
Of a near fall of water every sense
Wakes from the charm of thought: swift-shrinking back,
I check my steps, and view the broken scene.
Smooth to the shelving brink a copious flood
Rolls fair, and placid; where collected all,
In one impetuous torrent, down the steep
It thundering shoots, and shakes the country round.
At first, an azure sheet, it rushes broad;
Then whitening by degrees, as prone it falls,
And from the loud-resounding rocks below
Dash'd in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft
A hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower.
Nor can the tortured wave here find repose:
But, raging still amid the shaggy rocks,
Now flashes o'er the scatter'd fragments, now
Aslant the hollow channel rapid darts;
And falling fast from gradual slope to slope,
With wild infracted course, and lessen'd roar,
It gains a safer bed, and steals, at last,
Along the mazes of the quiet vale.
Invited from the cliff, to whose dark brow

He clings, the steep-ascending eagle soars,
With upward pinions through the flood of day;
And, giving full his bosom to the blaze,
Gains on the sun; while all the tuneful race,
Smit by afflictive noon, disorder'd droop,
Deep in the thicket; or, from bower to bower
Responsive, force an interrupted strain.
The stock-dove only through the forest cooes,
Mournfully hoarse; oft ceasing from his plaint,
Short interval of weary woe! again
The sad idea of his murder'd mate,
Struck from his side by savage fowler's guile,
Across his fancy comes; and then resounds
A louder song of sorrow through the grove.
  Beside the dewy border let me sit,
All in the freshness of the humid air:
There in that hollow'd rock, grotesque and wild,
An ample chair moss-lined, and over head
By flowering umbrage shaded; where the bee
Strays diligent, and with the extracted balm
Of fragrant woodbine loads his little thigh.
  Now, while I taste the sweetness of the shade,
While Nature lies around deep-lull'd in noon,
Now come, bold Fancy, spread a daring flight,
And view the wonders of the torrid zone:
Climes unrelenting! with whose rage compared,
Yon blaze is feeble, and yon skies are cool.
See, how at once the bright effulgent sun,
Rising direct, swift chases from the sky

The short-lived twilight; and with ardent blaze
Looks gaily fierce through all the dazzling air:
He mounts his throne; but kind before him sends,
Issuing from out the portals of the morn,
The general breeze*, to mitigate his fire,
And breathe refreshment on a fainting world.
Great are the scenes, with dreadful beauty crown'd
And barbarous wealth, that see, each circling year,
Returning suns and double seasons† pass:
Rocks rich in gems, and mountains big with mines,
That on the high equator ridgy rise,
Whence many a bursting stream auriferous plays:
Majestic woods, of every vigorous green,
Stage above stage, high waving o'er the hills;
Or to the far horizon wide diffused,
A boundless deep immensity of shade.
Here lofty trees, to ancient song unknown,
The noble sons of potent heat and floods
Prone-rushing from the clouds, rear high to Heaven
Their thorny stems, and broad around them throw
Meridian gloom. Here, in eternal prime,
Unnumber'd fruits of keen delicious taste

* Which blows constantly between the tropics from the east, or the collateral points, the north-east and south-east; caused by the pressure of the rarefied air on that before it, according to the diurnal motion of the sun from east to west.

† In all climates between the tropics, the sun, as he passes and repasses in his annual motion, is twice a year vertical, which produces this effect.

And vital spirit, drink amid the cliffs,
And burning sands that bank the shrubby vales,
Redoubled day, yet in their rugged coats
A friendly juice to cool its rage contain.
Bear me, Pomona! to thy citron groves;
To where the lemon and the piercing lime,
With the deep orange, glowing through the green,
Their lighter glories blend. Lay me reclined
Beneath the spreading tamarind that shakes,
Fann'd by the breeze, its fever-cooling fruit.
Deep in the night the massy locust sheds,
Quench my hot limbs; or lead me through the maze,
Embowering endless, of the Indian fig;
Or thrown at gayer ease, on some fair brow,
Let me behold, by breezy murmurs cool'd,
Broad o'er my head the verdant cedar wave,
And high palmetos lift their graceful shade.
Or stretch'd amid these orchards of the sun,
Give me to drain the cocoa's milky bowl,
And from the palm to draw its freshening wine!
More bounteous far than all the frantic juice
Which Bacchus pours. Nor, on its slender twigs
Low-bending, be the full pomegranate scorn'd;
Nor, creeping through the woods, the gelid race
Of berries. Oft in humble station dwells
Unboastful worth, above fastidious pomp.
Witness, thou best Anana, thou the pride
Of vegetable life, beyond whate'er

The poets imaged in the golden age:
Quick let me strip thee of thy tufty coat,
Spread thy ambrosial stores, and feast with Jove!
From these the prospect varies. Plains immense
Lie stretch'd below, interminable meads,
And vast savannahs, where the wandering eye,
Unfix'd, is in a verdant ocean lost.
Another Flora there, of bolder hues,
And richer sweets, beyond our garden's pride,
Plays o'er the fields, and showers with sudden hand
Exuberant spring: for oft these valleys shift
Their green embroider'd robe to fiery brown,
And swift to green again, as scorching suns,
Or streaming dews and torrent rains, prevail.
Along these lonely regions, where, retired
From little scenes of art, great Nature dwells
In awful solitude, and nought is seen
But the wild herds that own no master's stall,
Prodigious rivers roll their fattening seas:
On whose luxuriant herbage, half-conceal'd,
Like a fallen cedar, far diffused his train,
Cased in green scales, the crocodile extends.
The flood disparts: behold! in plaited mail
Behemoth * rears his head. Glanced from his side,
The darted steel in idle shivers flies:
He fearless walks the plain, or seeks the hills;
Where, as he crops his varied fare, the herds,

* The hippopotamus, or river-horse.

In widening circle round, forget their food,
And at the harmless stranger wondering gaze.
Peaceful, beneath primeval trees, that cast
Their ample shade o'er Niger's yellow stream,
And where the Ganges rolls his sacred wave;
Or mid the central depth of blackening woods,
High raised in solemn theatre around,
Leans the huge elephant: wisest of brutes!
O truly wise, with gentle might endow'd,
Though powerful, not destructive! here he sees
Revolving ages sweep the changeful earth,
And empires rise and fall; regardless he
Of what the never-resting race of men
Project: thrice happy! could he 'scape their guile,
Who mine, from cruel avarice, his steps;
Or with his towery grandeur swell their state,
The pride of kings! or else his strength pervert,
And bid him rage amid the mortal fray,
Astonish'd at the madness of mankind.
Wide o'er the winding umbrage of the floods,
Like vivid blossoms glowing from afar,
Thick swarm the brighter birds. For Nature's hand,
That with a sportive vanity has deck'd
The plumy nations, there her gayest hues
Profusely pours.* But, if she bids them shine,
Array'd in all the beauteous beams of day,

* In all the regions of the torrid zone the birds, though more beautiful in their plumage, are observed to be less melodious than ours.

Yet frugal still, she humbles them in song.
Nor envy we the gaudy robes they lent
Proud Montezuma's realm, whose legions cast
A boundless radiance waving on the sun,
While Philomel is ours; while in our shades,
Through the soft silence of the listening night,
The sober-suited songstress trills her lay.

But come, my Muse, the desert-barrier burst,
A wild expanse of lifeless sand and sky:
And, swifter than the toiling caravan,
Shoot o'er the vale of Sennar; ardent climb
The Nubian mountains, and the secret bounds
Of jealous Abyssinia boldly pierce.
Thou art no ruffian, who beneath the mask
Of social commerce comest to rob their wealth;
No holy fury thou, blaspheming Heaven,
With consecrated steel to stab their peace,
And through the land, yet red from civil wounds,
To spread the purple tyranny of Rome.
Thou, like the harmless bee, mayst freely range,
From mead to mead bright with exalted flowers,
From jasmine grove to grove mayst wander gay,
Through palmy shades and aromatic woods,
That grace the plains, invest the peopled hills,
And up the more than Alpine mountains wave.
There on the breezy summit, spreading fair,
For many a league; or on stupendous rocks,
That from the sun-redoubling valley lift,
Cool to the middle air, their lawny tops;

Where palaces, and fanes, and villas rise;
And gardens smile around, and cultured fields;
And fountains gush; and careless herds and flocks
Securely stray; a world within itself,
Disdaining all assault: there let me draw
Ethereal soul, there drink reviving gales,
Profusely breathing from the spicy groves,
And vales of fragrance; there at distance hear
The roaring floods, and cataracts, that sweep
From disembowel'd earth the virgin gold;
And o'er the varied landscape, restless, rove,
Fervent with life of every fairer kind:
A land of wonders! which the sun still eyes
With ray direct, as of the lovely realm
Enamour'd, and delighting there to dwell.
  How changed the scene! in blazing height of noon,
The sun, oppress'd, is plunged in thickest gloom.
Still horror reigns, a dreary twilight round,
Of struggling night and day malignant mix'd.
For to the hot equator crowding fast,
Where, highly rarefied, the yielding air
Admits their stream, incessant vapours roll,
Amazing clouds on clouds continual heap'd;
Or whirl'd tempestuous by the gusty wind,
Or silent borne along, heavy, and slow,
With the big stores of steaming oceans charged.
Meantime, amid these upper seas, condensed
Around the cold aërial mountain's brow,
And by conflicting winds together dash'd,

The thunder holds his black tremendous throne;
From cloud to cloud the rending lightnings rage;
Till, in the furious elemental war
Dissolved, the whole precipitated mass
Unbroken floods and solid torrents pours.
The treasures these, hid from the bounded search
Of ancient knowledge; whence, with annual pomp,
Rich king of floods! o'erflows the swelling Nile.
From his two springs, in Gojam's sunny realm,
Pure-welling out, he through the lucid lake
Of fair Dambea rolls his infant stream.
There, by the naiads nursed, he sports away
His playful youth, amid the fragant isles,
That with unfading verdure smile around.
Ambitious, thence the manly river breaks;
And gathering many a flood, and copious fed
With all the mellow'd treasures of the sky,
Winds in progressive majesty along:
Through splendid kingdoms now devolves his maze,
Now wanders wild o'er solitary tracts
Of life-deserted sand; till, glad to quit
The joyless desert, down the Nubian rocks
From thundering steep to steep, he pours his urn,
And Egypt joys beneath the spreading wave.
His brother Niger too, and all the floods
In which the full-form'd maids of Afric lave
Their jetty limbs; and all that from the tract
Of woody mountains stretch'd through gorgeous Ind

Fall on Cor'mandel's coast, or Malabar;
From Menam's* orient stream, that nightly shines
With insect-lamps, to where Aurora sheds
On Indus' smiling banks the rosy shower:
All, at this bounteous season, ope their urns,
And pour untoiling harvest o'er the land.
Nor less thy world, Columbus, drinks, refresh'd,
The lavish moisture of the melting year.
Wide o'er his isles, the branching Oronoque
Rolls a brown deluge; and the native drives
To dwell aloft on life-sufficing trees,
At once his dome, his robe, his food, and arms.
Swell'd by a thousand streams, impetuous hurl'd
From all the roaring Andes, huge decends
The mighty Orellana.† Scarce the Muse
Dares stretch her wing o'er this enormous mass
Of rushing water; scarce she dares attempt
The sea-like Plata; to whose dread expanse,
Continuous depth, and wondrous length of course,
Our floods are rills. With unabated force,
In silent dignity they sweep along,
And traverse realms unknown, and blooming wilds,
And fruitful deserts, worlds of solitude,
Where the sun smiles and seasons teem in vain,
Unseen and unenjoy'd. Forsaking these,

* The river that runs through Siam: on whose banks a vast multitude of those insects, called fire-flies, make a beautiful appearance in the night.

† The river of the Amazons.

O'er peopled plains they fair-diffusive flow,
And many a nation feed, and circle safe,
In their soft bosom, many a happy isle;
The seat of blameless Pan, yet undisturb'd
By christian crimes and Europe's cruel sons.
Thus pouring on they proudly seek the deep,
Whose vanquish'd tide recoiling from the shock,
Yields to the liquid weight of half the globe;
And Ocean trembles for his green domain.

But what avails this wondrous waste of wealth?
This gay profusion of luxurious bliss?
This pomp of Nature? what their balmy meads,
Their powerful herbs, and Ceres void of pain?
By vagrant birds dispersed and wafting winds,
What their unplanted fruits? what the cool draughts,
The ambrosial food, rich gums, and spicy health,
Their forests yield? their toiling insects what?
Their silky pride, and vegetable robes?
Ah! what avail their fatal treasures, hid
Deep in the bowels of the pitying earth,
Golconda's gems, and sad Potosi's mines;
Where dwelt the gentlest children of the sun?
What all that Afric's golden rivers roll,
Her odorous woods, and shining ivory stores?
Ill-fated race! the softening arts of Peace,
Whate'er the humanizing Muses teach;
The godlike wisdom of the temper'd breast;
Progressive truth, the patient force of thought;

Investigation calm, whose silent powers
Command the world; the light that leads to Heaven;
Kind equal rule, the goverment of laws,
And all-protecting Freedom, which alone
Sustains the name and dignity of man:
These are not theirs. The parent sun himself
Seems o'er this world of slaves to tyrannize;
And, with oppressive ray, the roseate bloom
Of beauty blasting, gives the gloomy hue,
And feature gross: or worse, to ruthless deeds,
Mad jealousy, blind rage, and fell revenge,
Their fervid spirit fires. Love dwells not there,
The soft regards, the tenderness of life,
The heart-shed tear, the ineffable delight
Of sweet humanity: these court the beam
Of milder climes; in selfish fierce desire,
And the wild fury of voluptuous sense,
There lost. The very brute-creation there
This rage partakes, and burns with horrid fire.
Lo! the green serpent, from his dark abode,
Which even Imagination fears to tread,
At noon forth-issuing, gathers up his train
In orbs immense, then, darting out anew,
Seeks the refreshing fount; by which diffused,
He throws his folds: and while, with threatening tongue
And deathful jaws erect, the monster curls
His flaming crest, all other thirst appall'd,

Or shivering flies or check'd at distance stands,
Nor dares approach. But still more direful he,
The small close-lurking minister of fate,
Whose high-concocted venom through the veins
A rapid lightning darts, arresting swift
The vital current. Form'd to humble man,
This child of vengeful Nature! there, sublimed
To fearless lust of blood, the savage race
Roam, licensed by the shading hour of guilt,
And foul misdeed, when the pure day has shut
His sacred eye. The tiger darting fierce
Impetuous on the prey his glance has doom'd:
The lively shining leopard, speckled o'er
With many a spot, the beauty of the waste;
And, scorning all the taming arts of man,
The keen hyena, fellest of the fell.
These, rushing from the inhospitable woods
Of Mauritania, or the tufted isles,
That verdant rise amid the Libyan wild,
Innumerous glare around their shaggy king,
Majestic, stalking o'er the printed sand;
And, with imperious and repeated roars,
Demand their fated food. The fearful flocks
Crowd near the guardian swain; the nobler herds,
Where round their lordly bull, in rural ease
They ruminating lie, with horror hear
The coming rage. The awaken'd village starts;
And to her fluttering breast the mother strains
Her thoughtless infant. From the pyrate's den,

Or stern Morocco's tyrant fang escaped,
The wretch half wishes for his bonds again:
While, uproar all, the wilderness resounds,
From Atlas eastward to the frighted Nile.
Unhappy he! who from the first of joys,
Society, cut off, is left alone
Amid this world of death. Day after day,
Sad on the jutting eminence he sits,
And views the main that ever toils below;
Still fondly forming in the farthest verge,
Where the round ether mixes with the wave,
Ships, dim-discover'd dropping from the clouds;
At evening, to the setting sun he turns
A mournful eye, and down his dying heart
Sinks helpless; while the wonted roar is up,
And hiss continual through the tedious night.
Yet here, e'en here, into these black abodes
Of monsters, unappall'd, from stooping Rome,
And guilty Cæsar, Liberty retired,
Her Cato following through Numidian wilds:
Disdainful of Campania's gentle plains,
And all the green delights Ausonia pours;
When for them she must bend the servile knee,
And fawning take the splendid robber's boon.
Nor stop the terrors of these regions here.
Commission'd demons oft, angels of wrath,
Let loose the raging elements. Breathed hot
From all the boundless furnace of the sky,
And the wide glittering waste of burning sand,

A suffocating wind the pilgrim smites
With instant death. Patient of thirst and toil,
Son of the desert! e'en the camel feels,
Shot through his wither'd heart, the fiery blast.
Or from the black-red ether, bursting broad,
Sallies the sudden whirlwind. Straight the sands,
Commoved around, in gathering eddies play:
Nearer and nearer still they darkening come;
Till, with the general all-involving storm
Swept up, the whole continuous wilds arise;
And by their noonday fount dejected thrown,
Or sunk at night in sad disastrous sleep,
Beneath descending hills, the caravan
Is buried deep. In Cairo's crowded streets
The impatient merchant, wondering, waits in vain,
And Mecca saddens at the long delay.

But chief at sea, whose every flexile wave
Obeys the blast, the aërial tumult swells.
In the dread ocean, undulating wide,
Beneath the radiant line that girts the globe,
The circling Typhon*, whirl'd from point to point,
Exhausting all the rage of all the sky,
And dire Ecnephia* reign. Amid the heavens,
Falsely serene, deep in a cloudy speck†
Compress'd, the mighty tempest brooding dwells:

* Typhon and Ecnephia, names of particular storms or hurricanes, known only between the tropics.

† Called by sailors the Ox-eye, being in appearance at first no bigger.

Of no regard, save to the skilful eye,
Fiery and foul, the small prognostic hangs
Aloft, or on the promontory's brow
Musters its force. A faint deceitful calm,
A fluttering gale, the demon sends before,
To tempt the spreading sail. Then down at once,
Precipitant, descends a mingled mass
Of roaring winds, and flame, and rushing floods.
In wild amazement fix'd the sailor stands.
Art is too slow: by rapid fate oppress'd,
His broad-winged vessel drinks the whelming tide,
Hid in the bosom of the black abyss.
With such mad seas the daring Gama * fought,
For many a day, and many a dreadful night,
Incessant, labouring round the stormy Cape;
By bold ambition led, and bolder thirst
Of gold. For then from ancient gloom emerged
The rising world of trade: the Genius, then,
Of navigation, that, in hopeless sloth,
Had slumber'd on the vast Atlantic deep,
For idle ages, starting, heard at last
The Lusitanian Prince;† who, Heaven-inspired,
To love of useful glory roused mankind,
And in unbounded commerce mix'd the world.

* Vasco de Gama, the first who sailed round Africa, by the Cape of Good Hope, to the East Indies.

† Don Henry, third son to John the First, King of Portugal. His strong genius to the discovery of new countries was the chief source of all the modern improvements in navigation.

Increasing still the terrors of these storms,
His jaws horrific arm'd with threefold fate,
Here dwells the direful shark. Lured by the scent
Of steaming crowds, of rank disease, and death,
Behold! he rushing cuts the briny flood,
Swift as the gale can bear the ship along;
And, from the partners of that cruel trade,
Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,
Demands his share of prey; demands themselves.
The stormy fates descend: one death involves
Tyrants and slaves; when straight, their mangled limbs
Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas
With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal.
When o'er this world, by equinoctial rains
Flooded immense, looks out the joyless sun,
And draws the copious stream: from swampy fens,
Where putrefaction into life ferments,
And breathes destructive myriads; or from woods,
Impenetrable shades, recesses foul,
In vapours rank and blue corruption wrapt,
Whose gloomy horrors yet no desperate foot
Has ever dared to pierce; then, wasteful, forth
Walks the dire Power of pestilent disease.
A thousand hideous fiends her course attend,
Sick Nature blasting, and to heartless woe,
And feeble desolation, casting down
The towering hopes and all the pride of Man.
Such as, of late, at Carthagena quench'd

The British fire. You, gallant Vernon, saw
The miserable scene; you, pitying, saw
To infant-weakness sunk the warrior's arm;
Saw the deep-racking pang, the ghastly form,
The lip pale quivering, and the beamless eye
No more with ardour bright: you heard the groans
Of agonizing ships, from shore to shore;
Heard, nightly plunged amid the sullen waves,
The frequent corse; while on each other fix'd,
In sad presage, the blank assistants seem'd,
Silent, to ask, whom Fate would next demand.
What need I mention those inclement skies,
Where, frequent o'er the sickening city, Plague,
The fiercest child of Nemesis divine,
Descends? From Ethiopia's poison'd woods,
From stifled Cairo's filth, and fetid fields
With locust-armies putrefying heap'd,
This great destroyer sprung. Her awful rage
The brutes escape: Man is her destined prey,
Intemperate Man! and, o'er his guilty domes,
She draws a close incumbent cloud of death;
Uninterrupted by the living winds,
Forbid to blow a wholesome breeze; and stain'd
With many a mixture by the sun, suffused,
Of angry aspect. Princely wisdom, then,
Dejects his watchful eye; and from the hand
Of feeble justice, ineffectual, drop
The sword and balance: mute the voice of joy,
And hush'd the clamour of the busy world.

Empty the streets, with uncouth verdure clad;
Into the worst of deserts sudden turn'd
The cheerful haunt of men: unless escaped
From the doom'd house, where matchless horror reigns,
Shut up by barbarous fear, the smitten wretch,
With frenzy wild, breaks loose; and, loud to Heaven
Screaming, the dreadful policy arraigns,
Inhuman, and unwise. The sullen door,
Yet uninfected, on its cautious hinge
Fearing to turn, abhors society:
Dependants, friends, relations, Love himself,
Savaged by woe, forget the tender tie,
The sweet engagement of the feeling heart.
But vain their selfish care: the circling sky,
The wide enlivening air is full of fate;
And, struck by turns, in solitary pangs
They fall, unblest, untended, and unmourn'd.
Thus o'er the prostrate city black Despair
Extends her raven wing: while, to complete
The scene of desolation, stretch'd around,
The grim guards stand, denying all retreat,
And give the flying wretch a better death.

Much yet remains unsung: the rage intense
Of brazen-vaulted skies, of iron fields,
Where drought and famine starve the blasted year:
Fired by the torch of noon to tenfold rage,
The infuriate hill that shoots the pillar'd flame;

And, roused within the subterranean world,
The expanding earthquake, that resistless shakes
Aspiring cities from their solid base,
And buries mountains in the flaming gulf.
But 'tis enough; return, my vagrant Muse:
A nearer scene of horror calls thee home.
Behold, slow-settling o'er the lurid grove
Unusual darkness broods; and growing gains
The full possession of the sky, surcharged
With wrathful vapour, from the secret beds,
Where sleep the mineral generations, drawn.
Thence nitre, sulphur, and the fiery spume
Of fat bitumen, steaming on the day,
With various-tinctured trains of latent flame,
Pollute the sky, and in yon baleful cloud,
A reddening gloom, a magazine of fate,
Ferment; till, by the touch ethereal roused,
The dash of clouds, or irritating war
Of fighting winds, while all is calm below,
They furious spring. A boding silence reigns,
Dread through the dun expanse; save the dull sound
That from the mountain, previous to the storm,
Rolls o'er the muttering earth, disturbs the flood,
And shakes the forest-leaf without a breath.
Prone, to the lowest vale, the aërial tribes
Descend: the tempest-loving raven scarce
Dares wing the dubious dusk. In rueful gaze
The cattle stand, and on the scowling heavens

Cast a deploring eye; by man forsook,
Who to the crowded cottage hies him fast,
Or seeks the shelter of the downward cave.
'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all:
When to the startled eye the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud;
And following slower, in explosion vast,
The Thunder raises his tremendous voice.
At first, heard solemn o'er the verge of Heaven,
The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
The noise astounds: till over head a sheet
Of livid flame discloses wide; then shuts,
And opens wider; shuts and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.
Follows the loosen'd aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling; peal on peal
Crush'd horrible, convulsing heaven and earth.
Down comes a deluge of sonorous hail,
Or prone-descending rain. Wide-rent, the clouds
Pour a whole flood; and yet, its flame unquench'd,
The unconquerable lightning struggles through,
Ragged and fierce, or in red whirling balls,
And fires the mountains with redoubled rage.
Black from the stroke, above, the smouldring pine
Stands a sad shatter'd trunk; and, stretch'd below,
A lifeless group the blasted cattle lie:
Here the soft flocks, with that same harmless look

They wore alive, and ruminating still
In fancy's eye; and there the frowning bull,
And ox half-raised. Struck on the castled cliff,
The venerable tower and spiry fane
Resign their aged pride. The gloomy woods
Start at the flash, and from their deep recess,
Wide-flaming out, their trembling inmates shake.
Amid Carnarvon's mountains rages loud
The repercussive roar: with mighty crush,
Into the flashing deep, from the rude rocks
Of Penmanmaur heap'd hideous to the sky,
Tumble the smitten cliffs; and Snowden's peak,
Dissolving, instant yields his wintry load.
Far seen, the heights of heathy Cheviot blaze,
And Thulè bellows through her utmost isles.
Guilt hears appall'd, with deeply troubled thought.
And yet not always on the guilty head
Descends the fated flash. Young Celadon
And his Amelia were a matchless pair;
With equal virtue form'd, and equal grace,
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone:
Hers the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day.
They lov'd: but such the guileless passion was,
As in the dawn of time inform'd the heart
Of innocence and undissembling truth.
'Twas friendship, heighten'd by the mutual wish;
The enchanting hope, and sympathetic glow,

Beam'd from the mutual eye. Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer self;
Supremely happy in the awaken'd power
Of giving joy. Alone, amid the shades,
Still in harmonious intercourse they lived
The rural day, and talk'd the flowing heart,
Or sigh'd and look'd unutterable things.
So pass'd their life, a clear united stream,
By care unruffled; till, in evil hour,
The tempest caught them on the tender walk,
Heedless how far and where its mazes stray'd,
While, with each other blest, creative love
Still bade eternal Eden smile around.
Presaging instant fate, her bosom heaved
Unwonted sighs, and stealing oft a look
Of the big gloom, on Celadon her eye
Fell tearful, wetting her disorder'd cheek.
In vain assuring love, and confidence
In Heaven, repress'd her fear; it grew, and shook
Her frame near dissolution. He perceived
The unequal conflict, and as angels look
On dying saints, his eyes compassion shed,
With love illumined high. "Fear not," he said,
"Sweet innocence! thou stranger to offence,
And inward storm! He, who yon skies involves
In frowns of darkness, ever smiles on thee
With kind regard. O'er thee the secret shaft
That wastes at midnight, or the undreaded hour
Of noon, flies harmless: and that very voice,

Which thunders terror through the guilty heart,
With tongues of seraphs whispers peace to thine.
'Tis safety to be near thee sure, and thus
To clasp perfection!" From his void embrace,
(Mysterious Heaven!) that moment, to the ground,
A blacken'd corse, was struck the beauteous maid.
But who can paint the lover, as he stood,
Pierced by severe amazement, hating life,
Speechless, and fix'd in all the death of woe!
So, faint resemblance! on the marble tomb,
The well-dissembled mourner stooping stands,
For ever silent and for ever sad.

As from the face of Heaven the shatter'd clouds
Tumultuous rove, the interminable sky
Sublimer swells, and o'er the world expands
A purer azure. Through the lighten'd air
A higher lustre and a clearer calm,
Diffusive, tremble; while, as if in sign
Of danger past, a glittering robe of joy,
Set off abundant by the yellow ray,
Invests the fields; and nature smiles revived.

'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Join'd to the low of kine, and numerous bleat
Of flocks thick-nibbling through the clover'd vale.
And shall the hymn be marr'd by thankless Man,
Most-favour'd! who with voice articulate
Should lead the chorus of this lower world;
Shall he, so soon forgetful of the Hand
That hush'd the thunder, and serenes the sky,

Extinguish'd feel that spark the tempest waked,
That sense of powers exceeding far his own,
Ere yet his feeble heart has lost its fears?
Cheer'd by the milder beam, the sprightly youth
Speeds to the well-known pool, whose crystal depth
A sandy bottom shows. Awhile he stands
Gazing the inverted landscape, half afraid
To meditate the blue profound below;
Then plunges headlong down the circling flood.
His ebon tresses, and his rosy cheek
Instant emerge; and through the obedient wave,
At each short breathing by his lip repell'd,
With arms and legs according well, he makes,
As humour leads, an easy-winding path;
While, from his polish'd sides, a dewy light
Effuses on the pleased spectators round.
This is the purest exercise of health,
The kind refresher of the summer-heats;
Nor when cold Winter keens the brightening flood,
Would I weak-shivering linger on the brink.
Thus life redoubles, and is oft preserved,
By the bold swimmer, in the swift elapse
Of accident disastrous. Hence the limbs
Knit into force; and the same Roman arm,
That rose victorious o'er the conquer'd earth,
First learn'd, while tender, to subdue the wave.
Even from the body's purity the mind
Receives a secret sympathetic aid.
Close in the covert of a hazel copse,

Where, winded into pleasing solitudes,
Runs out the rambling dale, young Damon sat,
Pensive, and pierced with love's delightful pangs.
There to the stream that down the distant rocks
Hoarse-murmuring fell, and plaintive breeze that play'd
Among the bending willows, falsely he
Of Musidora's cruelty complain'd.
She felt his flame; but deep within her breast
In bashful coyness, or in maiden pride,
The soft return conceal'd; save when it stole
In sidelong glances from her downcast eye,
Or from her swelling soul in stifled sighs.
Touch'd by the scene, no stranger to his vows,
He framed a melting lay, to try her heart;
And, if an infant passion struggled there,
To call that passion forth. Thrice happy swain!
A lucky chance, that oft decides the fate
Of mighty monarchs, then decided thine.
For lo! conducted by the laughing Loves,
This cool retreat his Musidora sought:
Warm in her cheek the sultry season glow'd;
And, robed in loose array, she came to bathe
Her fervent limbs in the refreshing stream.
What shall he do? In sweet confusion lost,
And dubious flutterings, he a while remain'd:
A pure ingenuous elegance of soul,
A delicate refinement, known to few,
Perplex'd his breast, and urged him to retire:

But love forbade. Ye prudes in virtue, say,
Say, ye severest, what would you have done?
Meantime, this fairer nymph than ever blest
Arcadian stream, with timid eye around
The banks surveying, stripp'd her beauteous limbs,
To taste the lucid coolness of the flood.
Ah then! not Paris on the piny top
Of Ida panted stronger, when aside
The rival-goddesses the veil divine
Cast unconfined, and gave him all their charms,
Than, Damon, thou; as from the snowy leg,
And slender foot, the inverted silk she drew;
As the soft touch dissolved the virgin zone:
And, through the parting robe, the alternate breast,
With youth wild-throbbing, on thy lawless gaze
In full luxuriance rose. But, desperate youth,
How durst thou risk the soul-distracting view,
As from her naked limbs of glowing white,
Harmonious swell'd by Nature's finest hand,
In folds loose floating fell the fainter lawn;
And fair exposed she stood, shrunk from herself,
With fancy blushing, at the doubtful breeze
Alarm'd, and starting like the fearful fawn?
Then to the flood she rush'd; the parted flood
Its lovely guest with closing waves received;
And every beauty softening, every grace
Flushing anew, a mellow lustre shed:
As shines the lily through the crystal mild;
Or as the rose amid the morning dew,

Fresh from Aurora's hand, more sweetly glows,
While thus she wanton'd, now beneath the wave
But ill-conceal'd; and now with streaming locks,
That half-embraced her in a humid veil,
Rising again, the latent Damon drew
Such madening draughts of beauty to the soul,
As for a while o'erwhelm'd his raptured thought
With luxury too daring. Check'd, at last,
By love's respectful modesty, he deem'd
The theft profane, if aught profane to love
Can e'er be deem'd; and, struggling from the shade,
With headlong hurry fled: but first these lines,
Traced by his ready pencil, on the bank
With trembling hand he threw:—'Bathe on, my fair,
Yet unbeheld save by the sacred eye
Of faithful love: I go to guard thy haunt,
To keep from thy recess each vagrant foot,
And each licentious eye.' With wild surprise,
As if to marble struck, devoid of sense,
A stupid moment motionless she stood:
So stands the statue* that enchants the world,
So bending tries to veil the matchless boast,
The mingled beauties of exulting Greece.
Recovering, swift she flew to find those robes
Which blissful Eden knew not; and, array'd
In careless haste, the alarming paper snatch'd.

* The Venus of Medici.

But, when her Damon's well known hand she saw,
Her terrors vanish'd, and a softer train
Of mix'd emotions, hard to be described,
Her sudden bosom seized: shame void of guilt,
The charming blush of innocence, esteem,
And admiration of her lover's flame,
By modesty exalted: e'en a sense
Of self-approving beauty stole across
Her busy thought. At length a tender calm
Hush'd by degrees the tumult of her soul;
And on the spreading beech, that o'er the stream
Incumbent hung, she with the sylvan pen
Of rural lovers this confession carved,
Which soon her Damon kiss'd with weeping joy:
'Dear youth! sole judge of what these verses mean,
By fortune too much favour'd, but by love,
Alas! not favour'd less, be still as now
Discreet: the time may come you need not fly.'
The sun has lost his rage: his downward orb
Shoots nothing now but animating warmth
And vital lustre; that with various ray
Lights up the clouds, those beauteous robes of Heaven,
Incessant roll'd into romantic shapes,
The dream of waking fancy! broad below,
Cover'd with ripening fruits, and swelling fast
Into the perfect year, the pregnant earth
And all her tribes rejoice. Now the soft hour

Of walking comes: for him who lonely loves
To seek the distant hills, and there converse
With Nature; there to harmonize his heart,
And in pathetic song to breathe around
The harmony to others. Social friends,
Attuned to happy unison of soul;
To whose exalting eye a fairer world,
Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,
Displays its charms; whose minds are richly fraught
With philosophic stores, superior light;
And in whose breast, enthusiastic, burns
Virtue, the sons of interest deem romance;
Now call'd abroad enjoy the falling day:
Now to the verdant Portico of woods,
To Nature's vast Lyceum forth they walk;
By that kind School where no proud master reigns,
The full free converse of the friendly heart,
Improving and improved. Now from the world,
Sacred to sweet retirement, lovers steal,
And pour their souls in transport, which the Sire
Of love approving hears, and calls it good.
Which way, Amanda, shall we bend our course?
The choice perplexes. Wherefore should we choose?
All is the same with thee. Say, shall we wind
Along the streams? or walk the smiling mead?
Or court the forest glades? or wander wild
Among the waving harvests? or ascend,
While radiant Summer opens all its pride,

Thy hill, delightful Shene?* Here let us sweep
The boundless landscape: now the raptured eye,
Exulting swift, to huge Augusta send,
Now to the Sister-Hills† that skirt her plain,
To lofty Harrow now, and now to where
Majestic Windsor lifts his princely brow.
In lovely contrast to this glorious view
Calmly magnificent, then will we turn
To where the silver Thames first rural grows.
There let the feasted eye unwearied stray:
Luxurious, there, rove through the pendent woods
That nodding hang o'er Harrington's retreat;
And, stooping thence to Ham's embowering walks,
Beneath whose shades, in spotless peace retired,
With Her the pleasing partner of his heart,
The worthy Queensberry yet laments his Gay,
And polish'd Cornbury woos the willing Muse,
Slow let us trace the matchless vale of Thames;
Fair winding up to where the Muses haunt
In Twit'nam's bowers, and for their Pope implore
The healing God;‡ to royal Hampton's pile,
To Clermont's terraced height, and Esher's groves,
Where in the sweetest solitude, embraced
By the soft windings of the silent Mole,
From courts and senates Pelham finds repose.

* The old name of Richmond, signifying in Saxon, Shining, or Splendor.

† Highgate and Hampstead.

‡ In his last sickness.

Inchanting vale! beyond whate'er the Muse
Has of Achaia or Hesperia sung!
O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!
On which the Power of Cultivation lies,
And joys to see the wonders of his toil.
Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays!
Happy Britannia! where the Queen of Arts,
Inspiring vigour, Liberty abroad
Walks, unconfined, even to thy farthest cots,
And scatters plenty with unsparing hand.
Rich is thy soil, and merciful thy clime;
Thy streams unfailing in the Summer's drought;
Unmatch'd thy guardian oaks; thy valleys float
With golden waves: and on thy mountains flocks
Bleat numberless! while, roving round their sides,
Bellow the blackening herds in lusty droves.
Beneath, thy meadows glow, and rise unquell'd
Against the mower's scythe. On every hand
Thy villas shine. Thy country teems with wealth;
And property assures it to the swain,
Pleased and unwearied, in his guarded toil.
Full are thy cities with the sons of Art;
And trade and joy, in every busy street,
Mingling are heard; e'en Drudgery himself,
As at the car he sweats, or dusty hews

The palace stone, looks gay. Thy crowded ports,
Where rising masts an endless prospect yield,
With labour burn, and echo to the shouts
Of hurried sailor, as he hearty waves
His last adieu, and loosening every sheet,
Resigns the spreading vessel to the wind.
Bold, firm, and graceful are thy generous youth,
By hardship sinew'd, and by danger fired,
Scattering the nations where they go; and first
Or on the listed plain, or stormy seas.
Mild are thy glories too, as o'er the plans
Of thriving peace thy thoughtful sires preside;
In genius, and substantial learning, high;
For every virtue, every worth renown'd;
Sincere, plain-hearted, hospitable, kind;
Yet like the mustering thunder when provoked,
The dread of tyrants, and the sole resource
Of those that under grim oppression groan.
Thy sons of Glory many! Alfred thine,
In whom the splendour of heroic war,
And more heroic peace, when govern'd well,
Combine; whose hallow'd name the Virtues saint,
And his own Muses love; the best of kings!
With him thy Edwards and thy Henries shine,
Names dear to fame; the first who deep impress'd
On haughty Gaul the terror of thy arms,
That awes her genius still. In statesmen thou,
And patriots, fertile. Thine a steady More,
Who, with a generous though mistaken zeal,

Withstood a brutal tyrant's useful rage,
Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
Like rigid Cincinnatus nobly poor,
A dauntless soul erect, who smiled on death.
Frugal and wise, a Walsingham is thine,
A Drake, who made thee mistress of the deep,
And bore thy name in thunder round the world.
Then flamed thy spirit high: but who can speak
The numerous worthies of the Maiden Reign?
In Raleigh mark their every glory mix'd;
Raleigh, the scourge of Spain! whose breast with all
The sage, the patriot, and the hero burn'd,
Nor sunk his vigour, when a coward-reign
The warrior fetter'd, and at last resign'd,
To glut the vengeance of a vanquish'd foe.
Then active still and unrestrain'd, his mind
Explored the vast extent of ages past,
And with his prison-hours enrich'd the world;
Yet found no times, in all the long research,
So glorious, or so base, as those he proved,
In which he conquer'd, and in which he bled.
Nor can the Muse the gallant Sidney pass,
The plume of war! with early laurels crown'd,
The lover's myrtle, and the poet's bay.
A Hampden too is thine, illustrious land,
Wise, strenuous, firm, of unsubmitting soul,
Who stemm'd the torrent of a downward age
To slavery prone, and bade thee rise again,

In all thy native pomp of freedom bold.
Bright, at his call, thy Age of Men effulged,
Of Men on whom late time a kindling eye
Shall turn, and tyrants tremble while they read.
Bring every sweetest flower, and let me strew
The grave where Russel lies; whose temper'd blood
With calmest cheerfulness for thee resign'd,
Stain'd the sad annals of a giddy reign;
Aiming at lawless power, though meanly sunk
In loose inglorious luxury. With him
His friend, the British Cassius,* fearless bled;
Of high determined spirit, roughly brave,
By ancient learning to the enlighten'd love
Of ancient freedom warm'd. Fair thy renown
In awful sages and in noble bards;
Soon as the light of dawning Science spread
Her orient ray, and waked the Muses' song.
Thine is a Bacon; hapless in his choice,
Unfit to stand the civil storm of state,
And through the smooth barbarity of courts,
With firm but pliant virtue, forward still
To urge his course: him for the studious shade
Kind Nature form'd, deep, comprehensive, clear,
Exact, and elegant: in one rich soul,
Plato, the Stagyrite, and Tully join'd.
The great deliverer he! who from the gloom
Of cloister'd monks, and jargon-teaching schools,

* Algernon Sidney.

Let forth the true Philosophy, there long
Held in the magic chain of words and forms,
And definitions void: he led her forth,
Daughter of Heaven! that slow-ascending still,
Investigating sure the chain of things,
With radiant finger points to Heaven again.
The generous Ashley* thine, the friend of man;
Who scann'd his nature with a brother's eye,
His weakness prompt to shade, to raise his aim,
To touch the finer movements of the mind,
And with the moral beauty charm the heart.
Why need I name thy Boyle, whose pious search
Amid the dark recesses of his works,
The great Creator sought? And why thy Locke,
Who made the whole internal world his own?
Let Newton, pure intelligence, whom God
To mortals lent, to trace His boundless works
From laws sublimely simple, speak thy fame
In all philosophy. For lofty sense,
Creative fancy, and inspection keen
Through the deep windings of the human heart,
Is not wild Shakespeare thine and Nature's boast?
Is not each great, each amiable Muse
Of classic ages in thy Milton met?
A genius universal as his theme;
Astonishing as chaos, as the bloom

* Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury.

Of blowing Eden fair, as Heaven sublime!
Nor shall my verse that elder bard forget,
The gentle Spenser, Fancy's pleasing son;
Who, like a copious river, pour'd his song
O'er all the mazes of enchanted ground:
Nor thee, his ancient master, laughing sage,
Chaucer, whose native manners-painting verse,
Well moralized, shines through the gothic cloud
Of time and language o'er thy genius thrown.
May my song soften, as thy daughters I,
Britannia, hail! for beauty is their own,
The feeling heart, simplicity of life,
And elegance, and taste: the faultless form,
Shaped by the hand of harmony; the cheek,
Where the live crimson, through the native white
Soft-shooting, o'er the face diffuses bloom,
And every nameless grace; the parted lip,
Like the red rose bud moist with morning dew,
Breathing delight; and, under flowing jet,
Or sunny ringlets, or of circling brown,
The neck slight-shaded, and the swelling breast;
The look resistless, piercing to the soul,
And by the soul inform'd, when dress'd in love
She sits high-smiling in the conscious eye.
Island of bliss! amid the subject seas,
That thunder round thy rocky coasts, set up,
At once the wonder, terror, and delight
Of distant nations; whose remotest shores

Can soon be shaken by thy naval arm;
Not to be shook thyself, but all assaults
Baffling, as thy hoar cliffs the loud sea-wave.
O Thou! by whose Almighty nod the scale
Of empire rises, or alternate falls,
Send forth the saving Virtues round the land,
In bright patrol: white Peace, and social Love;
The tender-looking Charity, intent
On gentle deeds, and shedding tears through smiles;
Undaunted Truth, and Dignity of mind:
Courage composed, and keen; sound Temperance,
Healthful in heart and look; clear Chastity,
With blushes reddening as she moves along,
Disorder'd at the deep regard she draws;
Rough Industry; Activity untired,
With copious life inform'd, and all awake:
While in the radiant front, superior shines
That first paternal virtue, Public Zeal;
Who throws o'er all an equal wide survey,
And, ever musing on the common weal,
Still labours glorious with some great design.
Low walks the sun, and broadens by degrees,
Just o'er the verge of day. The shifting clouds
Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train,
In all their pomp attend his setting throne.
Air, earth, and ocean smile immense. And now,
As if his weary chariot sought the bowers
Of Amphitritè, and her tending nymphs,
(So Grecian fable sung) he dips his orb;

Now half-immersed; and now a golden curve
Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.
For ever running an enchanted round,
Passes the day, deceitful, vain, and void;
As fleets the vision o'er the formful brain,
This moment hurrying wild the impassion'd soul,
The next in nothing lost. 'Tis so to him,
The dreamer of this earth, an idle blank:
A sight of horror to the cruel wretch,
Who all day long in sordid pleasure roll'd,
Himself a useless load, has squander'd vile,
Upon his scoundrel train, what might have cheer'd
A drooping family of modest worth.
But to the generous still-improving mind,
That gives the hopeless heart to sing for joy,
Diffusing kind beneficence around,
Boastless, as now descends the silent dew;
To him the long review of order'd life
Is inward rapture, only to be felt.
Confess'd from yonder slow-extinguish'd clouds,
All ether softening, sober Evening takes
Her wonted station in the middle air;
A thousand shadows at her beck. First this
She sends on earth; then that of deeper dye
Steals soft behind; and then a deeper still,
In circle following circle, gathers round,
To close the face of things. A fresher gale
Begins to wave the wood, and stir the stream,
Sweeping with shadowy gust the fields of corn;

While the quail clamours for his running mate.
Wide o'er the thistly lawn, as swells the breeze,
A whitening shower of vegetable down
Amusive floats. The kind impartial care
Of Nature nought disdains: thoughtful to feed
Her lowest sons, and clothe the coming year,
From field to field the feather'd seeds she wings.
His folded flock secure, the shepherd home
Hies, merry-hearted; and by turns relieves
The ruddy milk-maid of her brimming pail;
The beauty whom perhaps his witless heart,
Unknowing what the joy-mix'd anguish means,
Sincerely loves, by that best language shown
Of cordial glances, and obliging deeds.
Onward they pass, o'er many a panting height,
And valley sunk, and unfrequented; where
At fall of eve the fairy people throng,
In various game, and revelry, to pass
The summer night, as village-stories tell.
But far about they wander from the grave
Of him, whom his ungentle fortune urged
Against his own sad breast to lift the hand
Of impious violence. The lonely tower
Is also shunn'd; whose mournful chambers hold,
So night-struck Fancy dreams, the yelling ghost.
Among the crooked lanes, on every hedge,
The glowworm lights his gem; and through the dark
A moving radiance twinkles. Evening yields

The world to Night; not in her winter-robe
Of massy stygian woof, but loose array'd
In mantle dun. A faint erroneous ray,
Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
Flings half an image on the straining eye;
While wavering woods, and villages, and streams,
And rocks, and mountain-tops, that long retain'd
The ascending gleam, are all one swimming scene,
Uncertain if beheld. Sudden to Heaven
Thence weary vision turns; where, leading soft
The silent hours of love, with purest ray
Sweet Venus shines; and from her genial rise,
When day-light sickens till it springs afresh,
Unrival'd reigns, the fairest lamp of Night.
As thus the effulgence tremulous I drink,
With cherish'd gaze, the lambent lightnings shoot
Across the sky; or horizontal dart
In wondrous shapes: by fearful murmuring crowds
Portentous deem'd. Amid the radiant orbs,
That more than deck, that animate the sky,
The life-infusing suns of other worlds;
Lo! from the dread immensity of space
Returning, with accelerated course,
The rushing comet to the sun descends;
And as he sinks below the shading earth,
With awful train projected o'er the heavens,
The guilty nations tremble. But, above
Those superstitious horrors that enslave
The fond sequacious herd, to mystic faith

And blind amazement prone, the enlighten'd few,
Whose godlike minds Philosophy exalts,
The glorious stranger hail. They feel a joy
Divinely great; they in their powers exult,
That wondrous force of thought, which mounting spurns
This dusky spot, and measures all the sky;
While, from his far excursion through the wilds
Of barren ether, faithful to his time,
They see the blazing wonder rise anew,
In seeming terror clad, but kindly bent
To work the will of all-sustaining Love:
From his huge vapoury train perhaps to shake
Reviving moisture on the numerous orbs,
Through which his long ellipsis winds; perhaps
To lend new fuel to declining suns,
To light up worlds, and feed the eternal fire.
With thee, serene Philosophy, with thee,
And thy bright garland, let me crown my song!
Effusive source of evidence, and truth!
A lustre shedding o'er the ennobled mind,
Stronger than summer-noon; and pure as that,
Whose mild vibrations soothe the parted soul,
New to the dawning of celestial day.
Hence through her nourish'd powers, enlarged by thee,
She springs aloft, with elevated pride,
Above the tangling mass of low desires,
That bind the fluttering crowd; and, angel-wing'd,

The heights of science and of virtue gains,
Where all is calm and clear; with Nature round,
Or in the starry regions, or the abyss,
To Reason's and to Fancy's eye display'd:
The First up-tracing, from the dreary void,
The chain of causes and effects to Him,
The world-producing Essence, who alone
Possesses being; while the Last receives
The whole magnificence of heaven and earth,
And every beauty, delicate or bold,
Obvious or more remote, with livelier sense,
Diffusive painted on the rapid mind.

Tutor'd by thee, hence Poetry exalts
Her voice to ages; and informs the page
With music, image, sentiment, and thought,
Never to die! the treasure of mankind!
Their highest honour, and their truest joy!

Without thee what were unenlighten'd Man?
A savage roaming through the woods and wilds,
In quest of prey; and with the unfashion'd fur
Rough-clad; devoid of every finer art,
And elegance of life. Nor happiness
Domestic, mix'd of tenderness and care,
Nor moral excellence, nor social bliss,
Nor guardian law were his; nor various skill
To turn the furrow, or to guide the tool
Mechanic; nor the heaven-conducted prow
Of navigation bold, that fearless braves
The burning line or dares the wintry pole;

Mother severe of infinite delights!
Nothing, save rapine, indolence, and guile,
And woes on woes, a still-revolving train!
Whose horrid circle had made human life
Than non-existence worse: but, taught by thee,
Ours are the plans of policy and peace;
To live like brothers, and conjunctive all
Embellish life. While thus laborious crowds
Ply the tough oar, Philosophy directs
The ruling helm; or like the liberal breath
Of potent Heaven, invisible, the sail
Swells out, and bears the inferior world along.
Nor to this evanescent speck of earth
Poorly confined, the radiant tracts on high
Are her exalted range; intent to gaze
Creation through; and, from that full complex
Of never ending wonders, to conceive
Of the Sole Being right, who spoke the Word,
And Nature moved complete. With inward view,
Thence on the ideal kingdom swift she turns
Her eye; and instant, at her powerful glance,
The obedient phantoms vanish or appear;
Compound, divide, and into order shift,
Each to his rank, from plain perception up
To the fair forms of Fancy's fleeting train:
To reason then, deducing truth from truth;
And notion quite abstract; where first begins
The world of spirits, action all, and life
Unfetter'd, and unmixt. But here the cloud,

(So wills Eternal Providence) sits deep. 1708
Enough for us to know that this dark state,
In wayward passions lost and vain pursuits,
This Infancy of Being, cannot prove
The final issue of the works of God,
By boundless Love and perfect Wisdom form'd,
And ever rising with the rising mind.

AUTUMN.

INSCRIBED

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ARTHUR ONSLOW, ESQ.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

ARGUMENT.

THE subject proposed. Addressed to Mr. Onslow. A prospect of the Fields ready for Harvest. Reflections in praise of Industry raised by that view. Reaping. A Tale relative to it. A Harvest Storm. Shooting and Hunting; their barbarity. A ludicrous account of Foxhunting. A view of an Orchard. Wall Fruit. A Vineyard. A description of Fogs, frequent in the latter part of Autumn; whence a digression, inquiring into the rise of Fountains and Rivers. Birds of season considered, that now shift their Habitation. The prodigious number of them that cover the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland. Hence a view of the Country. A prospect of the discoloured, fading Woods. After a gentle dusky day, Moonlight. Autumnal Meteors. Morning: to which succeeds a calm, pure, sunshiny Day, such as usually shuts up the season. The Harvest being gathered in, the Country dissolved in joy. The whole concludes with a Panegyric on a philosophical Country Life.

AUTUMN.

Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on; the Doric reed once more,
Well pleased, I tune. Whate'er the wintry frost
Nitrous prepared; the various blossom'd Spring
Put in white promise forth; and Summer-suns
Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.
Onslow! the Muse, ambitious of thy name,
To grace, inspire, and dignify her song,
Would from the public voice thy gentle ear
A while engage. Thy noble cares she knows,
The patriot virtues that distend thy thought,
Spread on thy front, and in thy bosom glow;
While listening senates hang upon thy tongue,
Devolving through the maze of eloquence
A roll of periods, sweeter than her song.

But she too pants for public virtue, she,
Though weak of power, yet strong in ardent will,
Whene'er her country rushes on her heart,
Assumes a bolder note, and fondly tries
To mix the patriot's with the poet's flame.
When the bright Virgin gives the beauteous days,
And Libra weighs in equal scales the year;
From Heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence shook
Of parting Summer, a serener blue,
With golden light enliven'd, wide invests
The happy world. Attemper'd suns arise,
Sweet-beam'd, and shedding oft through lucid clouds
A pleasing calm; while broad, and brown, below
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
Rich, silent, deep, they stand; for not a gale
Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain:
A calm of plenty! till the ruffled air
Falls from its poise, and gives the breeze to blow.
Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky;
The clouds fly different; and the sudden sun
By fits effulgent gilds the illumined field,
And black by fits the shadows sweep along.
A gaily chequer'd heart-expanding view,
Far as the circling eye can shoot around,
Unbounded tossing in a flood of corn.
These are thy blessings, Industry! rough power!
Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain;

Yet the kind source of every gentle art,
And all the soft civility of life:
Raiser of human kind! by Nature cast,
Naked, and helpless, out amid the woods
And wilds, to rude inclement elements;
With various seeds of art deep in the mind
Implanted, and profusely pour'd around
Materials infinite, but idle all.
Still unexerted, in the unconscious breast,
Slept the lethargic powers; Corruption still,
Voracious, swallow'd what the liberal hand
Of bounty scatter'd o'er the savage year:
And still the sad barbarian, roving, mix'd
With beasts of prey; or for his acorn-meal
Fought the fierce tusky boar; a shivering wretch!
Aghast, and comfortless, when the bleak north,
With Winter charged, let the mix'd tempest fly,
Hail, rain, and snow, and bitter-breathing frost:
Then to the shelter of the hut he fled;
And the wild season, sordid, pined away.
For home he had not; home is the resort
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and supported, polish'd friends,
And dear relations mingle into bliss.
But this the rugged savage never felt,
E'en desolate in crowds; and thus his days
Roll'd heavy, dark, and unenjoy'd along:
A waste of time! till Industry approach'd,
And roused him from his miserable sloth:

His faculties unfolded; pointed out,
Where lavish Nature the directing hand
Of art demanded; show'd him how to raise
His feeble force by the mechanic powers,
To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth,
On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,
On what the torrent, and the gather'd blast;
Gave the tall ancient forest to his axe;
Taught him to chip the wood, and hew the stone,
Till by degrees the finish'd fabric rose;
Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,
And wrapt them in the woolly vestment warm,
Or bright in glossy silk, and flowing lawn;
With wholesome viands fill'd his table, pour'd
The generous glass around, inspired to wake
The life-refining soul of decent wit:
Nor stopp'd at barren bare necessity;
But still advancing bolder, led him on
To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace;
And, breathing high ambition through his soul,
Set science, wisdom, glory, in his view,
And bade him be the Lord of all below.
Then gathering men their natural powers combined,
And form'd a Public; to the general good
Submitting, aiming, and conducting all.
For this the Patriot-Council met, the full,
The free, and fairly represented Whole;
For this they plann'd the holy guardian laws,

Distinguish'd orders, animated arts,
And with joint force Oppression chaining, set
Imperial Justice at the helm; yet still
To them accountable: nor slavish dream'd
That toiling millions must resign their weal,
And all the honey of their search, to such
As for themselves alone themselves have raised.
Hence every form of cultivated life
In order set, protected, and inspired,
Into perfection wrought. Uniting all,
Society grew numerous, high, polite,
And happy. Nurse of art! the city rear'd
In beauteous pride her tower-encircled head;
And, stretching street on street, by thousands drew,
From twining woody haunts, or the tough yew
To bows strong-straining, her aspiring sons.
Then Commerce brought into the public walk
The busy merchant; the big warehouse built;
Raised the strong crane; choked up the loaded street
With foreign plenty; and thy stream, O Thames,
Large, gentle, deep, majestic, king of floods!
Chose for his grand resort. On either hand,
Like a long wintry forest, groves of masts
Shot up their spires; the bellying sheet between
Possess'd the breezy void; the sooty hulk
Steer'd sluggish on; the splendid barge along
Row'd, regular, to harmony; around,
The boat, light-skimming, stretch'd its oary wings;

While deep the various voice of fervent toil
From bank to bank increased; whence ribb'd with oak,
To bear the British thunder, black, and bold,
The roaring vessel rush'd into the main.
Then too the pillar'd dome, magnific, heaved
Its ample roof; and Luxury within
Pour'd out her glittering stores: the canvass smooth,
With glowing life protuberant, to the view
Embodied rose; the statue seem'd to breathe,
And soften into flesh; beneath the touch
Of forming art, imagination-flush'd.
All is the gift of Industry; whate'er
Exalts, embellishes, and renders life
Delightful. Pensive Winter cheer'd by him
Sits at the social fire, and happy hears
The excluded tempest idly rave along;
His harden'd fingers deck the gaudy Spring;
Without him Summer were an arid waste;
Nor to the Autumnal months could thus transmit
Those full, mature, immeasurable stores,
That, waving round, recall my wandering song.
Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day;
Before the ripen'd field the reapers stand,
In fair array, each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate
By nameless gentle offices her toil.

At once they stoop, and swell the lusty sheaves;
While through their cheerful band the rural talk,
The rural scandal, and the rural jest,
Fly harmless, to deceive the tedious time,
And steal unfelt the sultry hours away.
Behind the master walks, builds up the shocks;
And, conscious, glancing oft on every side
His sated eye, feels his heart heave with joy.
The gleaners spread around, and here and there,
Spike after spike, their scanty harvest pick.
Be not too narrow, husbandmen! but fling
From the full sheaf, with charitable stealth,
The liberal handful. Think, oh grateful think!
How good the God of Harvest is to you;
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields;
While these unhappy partners of your kind
Wide-hover round you, like the fowls of heaven,
And ask their humble dole. The various turns
Of fortune ponder; that your sons may want
What now, with hard reluctance, faint, ye give.

The lovely young Lavinia once had friends;
And Fortune smiled, deceitful, on her birth.
For, in her helpless years deprived of all,
Of every stay, save Innocence and Heaven,
She with her widow'd mother, feeble, old,
And poor, lived in a cottage, far retired
Among the windings of a woody vale;
By solitude and deep surrounding shades,
But more by bashful modesty, conceal'd.

Together thus they shunn'd the cruel scorn
Which virtue, sunk to poverty, would meet
From giddy passion and low-minded pride:
Almost on Nature's common bounty fed;
Like the gay birds that sung them to repose,
Content, and careless of to-morrow's fare.
Her form was fresher than the morning rose,
When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd and pure
As is the lily, or the mountain snow.
The modest Virtues mingled in her eyes,
Still on the ground dejected, darting all
Their humid beams into the blooming flowers:
Or when the mournful tale her mother told,
Of what her faithless fortune promised once,
Thrill'd in her thought, they, like the dewy star
Of evening, shone in tears. A native grace
Sat fair-proportion'd on her polish'd limbs,
Veil'd in a simple robe, their best attire,
Beyond the pomp of dress; for loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.
Thoughtless of beauty, she was Beauty's self,
Recluse amid the close-embowering woods.
As in the hollow breast of Appenine,
Beneath the shelter of encircling hills,
A myrtle rises, far from human eye,
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild;
So flourish'd blooming, and unseen by all,
The sweet Lavinia; till, at length, compell'd

By strong Necessity's supreme command,
With smiling patience in her looks, she went
To glean Palemon's fields. The pride of swains
Palemon was, the generous, and the rich;
Who led the rural life in all its joy
And elegance, such as Arcadian song
Transmits from ancient uncorrupted times;
When tyrant custom had not shackled man,
But free to follow Nature was the mode.
He then, his fancy with autumnal scenes
Amusing, chanced beside his reaper-train
To walk, when poor Lavinia drew his eye;
Unconcious of her power, and turning quick
With unaffected blushes from his gaze:
He saw her charming, but he saw not half
The charms her down-cast modesty conceal'd.
That very moment love and chaste desire
Sprung in his bosom, to himself unknown;
For still the world prevail'd and its dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn,
Should his heart own a gleaner in the field;
And thus in secret to his soul he sigh'd:—
"What pity! that so delicate a form,
By beauty kindled, where enlivening sense
And more than vulgar goodness seem to dwell,
Should be devoted to the rude embrace
Of some indecent clown! She looks, methinks,
Of old Acasto's line; and to my mind
Recalls that patron of my happy life,

From whom my liberal fortune took its rise;
Now to the dust gone down; his houses, lands,
And once fair-spreading family, dissolved.
'Tis said that in some lone obscure retreat,
Urged by remembrance sad, and decent pride,
Far from those scenes which knew their better days,
His aged widow and his daughter live,
Whom yet my fruitless search could never find.
Romantic wish! would this the daughter were!"
When, strict inquiring, from herself he found
She was the same, the daughter of his friend,
Of bountiful Acasto; who can speak
The mingled passions that surprised his heart,
And through his nerves in shivering transport ran?
Then blazed his smother'd flame, avow'd, and bold;
And as he view'd her, ardent, o'er and o'er,
Love, gratitude, and pity wept at once.
Confused, and frighten'd at his sudden tears,
Her rising beauties flush'd a higher bloom,
As thus Palemon, passionate and just,
Pour'd out the pious rapture of his soul:
"And art thou then Acasto's dear remains?
She, whom my restless gratitude has sought,
So long in vain? O heavens! the very same,
The soften'd image of my noble friend;
Alive his every look, his every feature,
More elegantly touch'd. Sweeter than Spring!
Thou sole surviving blossom from the root

That nourish'd up my fortune! say, ah where,
In what sequester'd desert hast thou drawn
The kindest aspect of delighted Heaven?
Into such beauty spread, and blown so fair;
Though Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain
Beat keen and heavy on thy tender years?
O let me now into a richer soil
Transplant thee safe! where vernal suns and showers
Diffuse their warmest, largest influence;
And of my garden be the pride and joy!
Ill it befits thee, oh, it ill befits
Acasto's daughter, his, whose open stores,
Though vast, were little to his ampler heart,
The father of a country, thus to pick
The very refuse of those harvest fields,
Which from his bounteous friendship I enjoy.
Then throw that shameful pittance from thy hand,
But ill applied to such a rugged task;
The fields, the master, all, my fair, are thine;
If to the various blessings which thy house
Has on me lavish'd, thou wilt add that bliss,
That dearest bliss, the power of blessing thee!"
Here ceased the youth: yet still his speaking eye
Express'd the sacred triumph of his soul,
With conscious virtue, gratitude, and love,
Above the vulgar joy divinely raised.
Nor waited he reply. Won by the charm
Of goodness irresistible, and all

In sweet disorder lost, she blush'd consent.
The news immediate to her mother brought,
While, pierced with anxious thought, she pined away
The lonely moments for Lavinia's fate;
Amazed, and scarce believing what she heard,
Joy seized her wither'd veins, and one bright gleam
Of setting life shone on her evening-hours:
Not less enraptured than the happy pair;
Who flourish'd long in tender bliss, and rear'd
A numerous offspring, lovely like themselves,
And good, the grace of all the country round.
Defeating oft the labours of the year,
The sultry south collects a potent blast.
At first, the groves are scarcely seen to stir
Their trembling tops; and a still murmur runs
Along the soft-inclining fields of corn.
But as the aërial tempest fuller swells,
And in one mighty stream, invisible,
Immense, the whole excited atmosphere
Impetuous rushes o'er the sounding world;
Strain'd to the root, the stooping forest pours
A rustling shower of yet untimely leaves.
High beat, the circling mountains eddy in,
From the bare wild, the dissipated storm,
And send it in a torrent down the vale.
Exposed, and naked, to its utmost rage,
Through all the sea of harvest rolling round,
The billowy plain floats wide; nor can evade,

Though pliant to the blast, its seizing force;
Or whirl'd in air, or into vacant chaff
Shook waste. And sometimes too a burst of rain,
Swept from the black horizon, broad, descends
In one continuous flood. Still over head
The mingling tempest weaves its gloom, and still
The deluge deepens; till the fields around
Lie sunk, and flatted, in the sordid wave.
Sudden, the ditches swell; the meadows swim.
Red, from the hills, innumerable streams
Tumultuous roar; and high above its banks
The river lift; before whose rushing tide
Herds, flocks, and harvests, cottages, and swains,
Roll mingled down; all that the winds had spared
In one wild moment ruin'd; the big hopes,
And well earn'd treasures of the painful year.
Fled to some eminence, the husbandman
Helpless beholds the miserable wreck
Driving along; his drowning ox at once
Descending, with his labours scatter'd round,
He sees; and instant o'er his shivering thought
Comes Winter unprovided, and a train
Of claimant children dear. Ye masters, then,
Be mindful of the rough laborious hand
That sinks you soft in elegance and ease;
Be mindful of those limbs in russet clad,
Whose toil to yours is warmth and graceful pride;
And, oh! be mindful of that sparing board,
Which covers yours with luxury profuse,

Makes your glass sparkle, and your sense rejoice!
Nor cruelly demand what the deep rains
And all-involving winds have swept away.
Here the rude clamour of the sportsman's joy,
The gun fast-thundering, and the winded horn,
Would tempt the muse to sing the rural game:
How in his mid-career the spaniel struck,
Stiff, by the tainted gale, with open nose,
Outstretch'd and finely sensible, draws full,
Fearful and cautious, on the latent prey;
As in the sun the circling covey bask
Their varied plumes, and watchful every way,
Through the rough stubble turn the secret eye.
Caught in the meshy snare, in vain they beat
Their idle wings, entangled more and more:
Nor on the surges of the boundless air,
Though borne triumphant, are they safe; the gun,
Glanced just, and sudden, from the fowler's eye,
O'ertakes their sounding pinions: and again,
Immediate, brings them from the towering wing,
Dead to the ground; or drives them wide dispersed,
Wounded, and wheeling various, down the wind.
These are not subjects for the peaceful Muse,
Nor will she stain with such her spotless song;
Then most delighted, when she social sees
The whole mix'd animal-creation round
Alive and happy. 'Tis not joy to her,
The falsely cheerful barbarous game of death,
This rage of pleasure, which the restless youth

Awakes, impatient, with the gleaming morn:
When beasts of prey retire, that all night long,
Urged by necessity, had ranged the dark,
As if their conscious ravage shunn'd the light,
Ashamed. Not so the steady tyrant Man,
Who with the thoughtless insolence of power
Inflamed, beyond the most infuriate wrath
Of the worst monster that e'er roam'd the waste,
For sport alone pursues the cruel chase,
Amid the beamings of the gentle days.
Upbraid, ye ravening tribes, our wanton rage,
For hunger kindles you, and lawless want;
But lavish fed, in Nature's bounty roll'd,
To joy at anguish, and delight in blood,
Is what your horrid bosoms never knew.
Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare!
Scared from the corn, and now to some lone seat
Retired: the rushy fen; the ragged furze,
Stretch'd o'er the stony heath; the stubble chapt;
The thistly lawn; the thick entangled broom;
Of the same friendly hue, the wither'd fern;
The fallow ground laid open to the sun,
Concoctive; and the nodding sandy bank,
Hung o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
Vain is her best precaution; though she sits
Conceal'd, with folded ears; unsleeping eyes,
By Nature raised to take the horizon in;
And head couch'd close betwixt her hairy feet,
In act to spring away. The scented dew

Betrays her early labyrinth; and deep,
In scatter'd sullen openings, far behind,
With every breeze she hears the coming storm.
But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
The sighing gale, she springs amazed, and all
The savage soul of game is up at once:
The pack full-opening, various; the shrill horn
Resounded from the hills; the neighing steed,
Wild for the chase; and the loud hunter's shout;
O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
Mix'd in mad tumult, and discordant joy.

The stag too, singled from the herd, where long
He ranged the branching monarch of the shades,
Before the tempest drives. At first, in speed
He, sprightly, puts his faith; and, roused by fear,
Gives all his swift aërial soul to flight;
Against the breeze he darts, that way the more
To leave the lessening murderous cry behind:
Deception short! though fleeter than the winds
Blown o'er the keen-air'd mountain by the north,
He bursts the thickets, glances through the glades,
And plunges deep into the wildest wood;
If slow, yet sure, adhesive to the track
Hot-steaming, up behind him come again
The inhuman rout, and from the shady depth
Expel him, circling through his every shift.
He sweeps the forest oft; and sobbing sees
The glades, mild opening to the golden day;
Where, in kind contest, with his butting friends

He wont to struggle, or his loves enjoy.
Oft in the full-descending flood he tries
To lose the scent, and lave his burning sides:
Oft seeks the herd; the watchful herd, alarm'd,
With selfish care avoid a brother's woe.
What shall he do? His once so vivid nerves,
So full of buoyant spirit, now no more
Inspire the course; but fainting breathless toil,
Sick, seizes on his heart: he stands at bay;
And puts his last weak refuge in despair.
The big round tears run down his dappled face;
He groans in anguish: while the growling pack,
Blood-happy, hang at his fair jutting chest,
And mark his beauteous chequer'd sides with gore.
Of this enough. But if the sylvan youth,
Whose fervent blood boils into violence,
Must have the chase; behold, despising flight,
The roused up lion, resolute, and slow,
Advancing full on the protended spear,
And coward band, that circling wheel aloof.
Slunk from the cavern, and the troubled wood,
See the grim wolf; on him his shaggy foe
Vindictive fix, and let the ruffian die:
Or, growling horrid, as the brindled boar
Grins fell destruction, to the monster's heart
Let the dart lighten from the nervous arm.
These Britain knows not; give, ye Britons, then
Your sportive fury, pitiless, to pour
Loose on the nightly robber of the fold;

Him, from his craggy winding haunts unearth'd,
Let all the thunder of the chase pursue.
Throw the broad ditch behind you; o'er the hedge
High bound, resistless; nor the deep morass
Refuse, but through the shaking wilderness
Pick your nice way; into the perilous flood
Bear fearless, of the raging instinct full;
And as you ride the torrent, to the banks
Your triumph sound sonorous, running round,
From rock to rock, in circling echoes tost;
Then scale the mountains to their woody tops;
Rush down the dangerous steep; and o'er the lawn,
In fancy swallowing up the space between,
Pour all your speed into the rapid game.
For happy he! who tops the wheeling chase;
Has every maze evolved, and every guile
Disclosed; who knows the merits of the pack;
Who saw the villain seized, and dying hard,
Without complaint, though by a hundred mouths
Relentless torn: O glorious he, beyond
His daring peers! when the retreating horn
Calls them to ghostly halls of gray renown,
With woodland honours graced; the fox's fur,
Depending decent from the roof: and spread
Round the drear walls, with antic figures fierce,
The stag's large front: he then is loudest heard,
When the night staggers with severer toils,
With feats Thessalian Centaurs never knew,
And their repeated wonders shake the dome.

But first the fuel'd chimney blazes wide;
The tankards foam; and the strong table groans
Beneath the smoking sirloin, stretch'd immense
From side to side; in which, with desperate knife,
They deep incision make, and talk the while
Of England's glory, ne'er to be defaced
While hence they borrow vigour: or amain
Into the pasty plunged, at intervals,
If stomach keen can intervals allow,
Relating all the glories of the chase.
Then sated Hunger bids his Brother Thirst
Produce the mighty bowl; the mighty bowl,
Swell'd high with fiery juice, steams liberal round
A potent gale, delicious, as the breath
Of Maia to the love-sick shepherdess,
On violets diffused, while soft she hears
Her panting shepherd stealing to her arms.
Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn,
Mature and perfect, from his dark retreat
Of thirty years; and now his honest front
Flames in the light refulgent, not afraid
E'en with the vineyard's best produce to vie.
To cheat the thirsty moments, Whist a while
Walks his dull round beneath a cloud of smoke,
Wreath'd, fragrant, from the pipe; or the quick dice,
In thunder leaping from the box, awake
The sounding gammon: while romp-loving miss
Is haul'd about, in gallantry robust.

At last these puling idlenesses laid
Aside, frequent and full, the dry divan
Close in firm circle; and set, ardent, in
For serious drinking. Nor evasion sly,
Nor sober shift, is to the puking wretch
Indulged apart; but earnest, brimming bowls
Lave every soul, the table floating round,
And pavement, faithless to the fuddled foot.
Thus as they swim in mutual swill, the talk,
Vociferous at once from twenty tongues,
Reels fast from theme to theme; from horses, hounds,
To church or mistress, politics or ghost,
In endless mazes, intricate, perplex'd.
Meantime, with sudden interruption, loud,
The impatient catch bursts from the joyous heart;
That moment touch'd is every kindred soul;
And, opening in a full-mouth'd cry of joy,
The laugh, the slap, the jocund curse go round;
While, from their slumbers shook, the kennel'd hounds
Mix in the music of the day again.
As when the tempest, that has vex'd the deep
The dark night long, with fainter murmurs falls;
So gradual sinks their mirth. Their feeble tongues,
Unable to take up the cumbrous word,
Lie quite dissolved. Before their maudlin eyes,
Seen dim and blue, the double tapers dance,

Like the sun wading through the misty sky.
Then, sliding soft, they drop. Confused above,
Glasses and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
As if the table e'en itself was drunk,
Lie a wet broken scene; and wide, below,
Is heap'd the social slaughter: where astride
The lubber Power in filthy triumph sits,
Slumbrous, inclining still from side to side,
And steeps them drench'd in potent sleep till morn.
Perhaps some doctor, of tremendous paunch,
Awful and deep, a black abyss of drink,
Outlives them all; and from his buried flock
Retiring, full of rumination sad,
Laments the weakness of these latter times.
But if the rougher sex by this fierce sport
Is hurried wild, let not such horrid joy
E'er stain the bosom of the British Fair.
Far be the spirit of the chase from them!
Uncomely courage, unbeseeming skill;
To spring the fence, to rein the prancing steed;
The cap, the whip, the masculine attire;
In which they roughen to the sense, and all
The winning softness of their sex is lost.
In them 'tis graceful to dissolve at woe;
With every motion, every word, to wave
Quick o'er the kindling cheek the ready blush;
And from the smallest violence to shrink
Unequal, then the loveliest in their fears;
And by this silent adulation, soft,

To their protection more engaging Man.
O may their eyes no miserable sight,
Save weeping lovers, see! a nobler game,
Through love's enchanting wiles pursued, yet fled,
In chase ambiguous. May their tender limbs
Float in the loose simplicity of dress!
And, fashion'd all to harmony, alone
Know they to seize the captivated soul,
In rapture warbled from love-breathing lips;
To teach the lute to languish; with smooth step,
Disclosing motion in its every charm,
To swim along, and swell the mazy dance;
To train the foliage o'er the snowy lawn;
To guide the pencil, turn the tuneful page;
To lend new flavour to the fruitful year,
And heighten Nature's dainties: in their race
To rear their graces into second life;
To give society its highest taste;
Well order'd home man's best delight to make;
And by submissive wisdom, modest skill,
With every gentle care-eluding art,
To raise the virtues, animate the bliss,
And sweeten all the toils of human life:
This be the female dignity, and praise.

Ye swains, now hasten to the hazel bank;
Where, down yon dale, the wildly winding brook
Falls hoarse from steep to steep. In close array,
Fit for the thickets and the tangling shrub,
Ye virgins, come. For you their latest song

The woodlands raise; the clustering nuts for you
The lover finds amid the secret shade;
And, where they burnish on the topmost bough,
With active vigour crushes down the tree;
Or shakes them ripe from the resigning husk,
A glossy shower, and of an ardent brown,
As are the ringlets of Melinda's hair:
Melinda! form'd with every grace complete;
Yet these neglecting, above beauty wise,
And far transcending such a vulgar praise.
Hence from the busy joy-resounding fields,
In cheerful error, let us tread the maze
Of Autumn, unconfined; and taste, revived,
The breath of orchard big with bending fruit,
Obedient to the breeze and beating ray,
From the deep-loaded bough a mellow shower
Incessant melts away. The juicy pear
Lies, in a soft profusion, scatter'd round.
A various sweetness swells the gentle race;
By Nature's all-refining hand prepared;
Of temper'd sun, and water, earth, and air,
In ever changing composition mix'd.
Such, falling frequent through the chiller night,
The fragrant stores, the wide projected heaps
Of apples, which the lusty-handed Year,
Innumerous, o'er the blushing orchard shakes.
A various spirit, fresh, delicious, keen,
Dwells in their gelid pores; and, active, points
The piercing cyder for the thirsty tongue:

Thy native theme, and boon inspirer too,
Philips, Pomona's bard, the second thou
Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse,
With British freedom sing the British song:
How, from Silurian vats, high sparkling wines
Foam in transparent floods; some strong, to cheer
The wintry revels of the labouring hind;
And tasteful some, to cool the summer hours.

In this glad season, while his sweetest beams
The sun sheds equal o'er the meeken'd day;
Oh lose me in the green delightful walks
Of, Dodington, thy seat, serene and plain;
Where simple Nature reigns; and every view,
Diffusive, spreads the pure Dorsetian downs,
In boundless prospect; yonder shagg'd with wood,
Here rich with harvest, and there white with flocks!
Meantime the grandeur of thy lofty dome,
Far splendid, seizes on the ravish'd eye.
New beauties rise with each revolving day;
New columns swell; and still the fresh Spring finds
New plants to quicken, and new groves to green.
Full of thy genius all! the Muses' seat:
Where in the secret bower, and winding walk,
For virtuous Young and thee they twine the bay.
Here wandering oft, fired with the restless thirst
Of thy applause, I solitary court
The inspiring breeze: and meditate the book
Of Nature ever open; aiming thence,
Warm from the heart, to learn the moral song.

Here, as I steal along the sunny wall,
Where Autumn basks, with fruit empurpled deep,
My pleasing theme continual prompts my thought:
Presents the downy peach; the shining plum:
The ruddy, fragrant nectarine; and dark,
Beneath his ample leaf, the luscious fig.
The vine too here her curling tendrils shoots;
Hangs out her clusters, glowing to the south;
And scarcely wishes for a warmer sky.
Turn we a moment Fancy's rapid flight
To vigorous soils, and climes of fair extent;
Where, by the potent sun elated high,
The vineyard swells refulgent on the day;
Spreads o'er the vale; or up the mountain climbs,
Profuse; and drinks amid the sunny rocks,
From cliff to cliff increased, the heighten'd blaze.
Low bend the weighty boughs. The clusters clear,
Half through the foliage seen, or ardent flame,
Or shine transparent; while perfection breathes
White o'er the turgent film the living dew.
As thus they brighten with exalted juice,
Touch'd into flavour by the mingling ray;
The rural youth and virgins o'er the field,
Each fond for each to cull the autumnal prime,
Exulting rove, and speak the vintage nigh.
Then comes the crushing swain; the country floats,
And foams unbounded with the mashy flood;
That by degrees fermented, and refined,

Round the raised nations pours the cup of joy:
The claret smooth, red as the lip we press
In sparkling fancy, while we drain the bowl;
The mellow-tasted burgundy; and quick,
As is the wit it gives, the gay champagne.
Now, by the cool declining year condensed,
Descend the copious exhalations, check'd
As up the middle sky unseen they stole,
And roll the doubling fogs around the hill.
No more the mountain, horrid, vast, sublime,
Who pours a sweep of rivers from his sides,
And high between contending kingdoms rears
The rocky long division, fills the view
With great variety; but in a night
Of gathering vapour, from the baffled sense
Sinks dark and dreary. Thence expanding far,
The huge dusk, gradual, swallows up the plain:
Vanish the woods: the dim-seen river seems
Sullen, and slow, to roll the misty wave.
E'en in the height of noon oppress'd, the sun
Sheds weak, and blunt, his wide-refracted ray;
Whence glaring oft, with many a broaden'd orb,
He frights the nations. Indistinct on earth,
Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life
Objects appear; and, wilder'd, o'er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic. Till at last
Wreath'd dun around, in deeper circles still
Successive closing, sits the general fog

Unbounded o'er the world; and, mingling thick,
A formless grey confusion covers all.
As when of old (so sung the Hebrew Bard)
Light, uncollected, through the chaos urged
Its infant way; nor Order yet had drawn
His lovely train from out the dubious gloom.
These roving mists, that constant now begin
To smoke along the hilly country, these,
With weightier rains, and melted Alpine snows,
The mountain-cisterns fill, those ample stores
Of water, scoop'd among the hollow rocks;
Whence gush the streams, the ceaseless fountains play,
And their unfailing wealth the rivers draw.
Some sages say, that, where the numerous wave
For ever lashes the resounding shore,
Drill'd through the sandy stratum, every way,
The waters with the sandy stratum rise;
Amid whose angles infinitely strain'd,
They joyful leave their jaggy salts behind,
And clear and sweeten as they soak along.
Nor stops the restless fluid, mounting still,
Though oft amidst the irriguous vale it springs;
But to the mountain courted by the sand,
That leads it darkling on in faithful maze,
Far from the parent-main, it boils again
Fresh into day; and all the glittering hill
Is bright with spouting rills. But hence this vain

Amusive dream! why should the waters love
To take so far a journey to the hills,
When the sweet valleys offer to their toil
Inviting quiet, and a nearer bed?
Or if by blind ambition led astray,
They must aspire; why should they sudden stop
Among the broken mountain's rushy dells,
And, ere they gain its highest peak, desert
The attractive sand that charm'd their course so long?
Besides, the hard agglomerating salts,
The spoil of ages, would impervious choke
Their secret channels; or, by slow degrees,
High as the hills protrude the swelling vales:
Old Ocean too, suck'd through the porous globe,
Had long ere now forsook his horrid bed,
And brought Deucalion's watery times again.
Say then, where lurk the vast eternal springs,
That, like creating Nature, lie conceal'd
From mortal eye, yet with their lavish stores
Refresh the globe, and all its joyous tribes!
O thou pervading Genius, given to man,
To trace the secrets of the dark abyss,
O lay the mountains bare! and wide display
Their hidden structure to the astonish'd view!
Strip from the branching Alps their piny load;
The huge incumbrance of horrific woods
From Asian Taurus, from Imaus stretch'd

Athwart the roving Tartar's sullen bounds;
Give opening Hemus to my searching eye,
And high Olympus pouring many a stream!
O from the sounding summits of the north,
The Dofrine hills, through Scandinavia roll'd
To farthest Lapland and the frozen main;
From lofty Caucasus, far seen by those
Who in the Caspian and black Euxine toil;
From cold Riphean rocks, which the wild Russ
Believes the stony girdle* of the world:
And all the dreadful mountains, wrapp'd in storm,
Whence wide Siberia draws her lonely floods;
O sweep the eternal snows! hung o'er the deep,
That ever works beneath his sounding base,
Bid Atlas, propping heaven, as poets feign,
His subterranean wonders spread! unveil
The miny caverns, blazing on the day,
Of Abyssinia's cloud-compelling cliffs,
And of the bending Mountains† of the Moon!
O'ertopping all these giant sons of earth,
Let the dire Andes, from the radiant line
Stretch'd to the stormy seas that thunder round
The southern pole, their hideous deeps unfold!
Amazing scene! Behold! the glooms disclose;

* The Moscovites call the Riphean Mountains *Weliki Camenypoys*, that is, *the great stony Girdle:* because they suppose them to encompass the whole earth.

† A range of mountains in Africa, that surround all Monomotapa.

I see the rivers in their infant beds!
Deep, deep I hear them, labouring to get free;
I see the leaning strata, artful ranged;
The gaping fissures to receive the rains,
The melting snows, and ever dripping fogs.
Strow'd bibulous above I see the sands,
The pebbly gravel next, the layers then
Of mingled moulds, of more retentive earths
The gutter'd rocks and mazy-running clefts;
That, while the stealing moisture they transmit,
Retard its motion, and forbid its waste.
Beneath the incessant weeping of these drains,
I see the rocky siphons stretch'd immense,
The mighty reservoirs, of harden'd chalk,
Or stiff compacted clay, capacious form'd:
O'erflowing thence, the congregated stores,
The crystal treasures of the liquid world,
Through the stirr'd sands a bubbling passage burst;
And welling out, around the middle steep,
Or from the bottoms of the bosom'd hills,
In pure effusion flow. United, thus,
The exhaling sun, the vapour-burden'd air,
The gelid mountains, that to rain condensed
These vapours in continual current draw,
And send them, o'er the fair-divided earth,
In bounteous rivers to the deep again,
A social commerce hold, and firm support
The full-adjusted harmony of things.

When Autumn scatters his departing gleams,

Warn'd of approaching Winter, gather'd, play
The swallow-people; and toss'd wide around,
O'er the calm sky, in convolution swift,
The feather'd eddy floats: rejoicing once,
Ere to their wintry slumbers they retire;
In clusters clung, beneath the mouldering bank,
And where, unpierced by frost, the cavern sweats.
Or rather into warmer climes convey'd,
With other kindred birds of season, there
They twitter cheerful, till the vernal months
Invite them welcome back: for, thronging, now
Innumerous wings are in commotion all.

Where the Rhine loses his majestic force
In Belgian plains, won from the raging deep,
By diligence amazing, and the strong
Unconquerable hand of Liberty,
The stork-assembly meets; for many a day,
Consulting deep, and various, ere they take
Their arduous voyage through the liquid sky:
And now their route design'd, their leaders chose,
Their tribes adjusted, clean'd their vigorous wings;
And many a circle, many a short essay,
Wheel'd round and round, in congregation full
The figured flight ascends; and, riding high
The aërial billows, mixes with the clouds.

Or where the Northern ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule, and the Atlantic surge

Pours in among the stormy Hebrides;
Who can recount what transmigrations there
Are annual made? what nations come and go?
And how the living clouds on clouds arise?
Infinite wings! till all the plume-dark air,
And rude resounding shore are one wild cry.
Here the plain harmless native his small flock,
And herd diminutive of many hues,
Tends on the little island's verdant swell,
The shepherd's sea-girt reign; or, to the rocks
Dire-clinging, gathers his ovarious food;
Or sweeps the fishy shore! or treasures up
The plumage, rising full, to form the bed
Of luxury. And here a while the Muse,
High hovering o'er the broad cerulean scene,
Sees Caledonia, in romantic view:
Her airy mountains, from the waving main,
Invested with a keen diffusive sky,
Breathing the soul acute; her forests huge,
Incult, robust, and tall, by Nature's hand
Planted of old; her azure lakes between,
Pour'd out extensive, and of watery wealth
Full; winding deep, and green, her fertile vales;
With many a cool translucent brimming flood
Wash'd lovely, from the Tweed (pure parent stream,
Whose pastoral banks first heard my Doric reed,
With, silvan Jed, thy tributary brook)
To where the north-inflated tempest foams

O'er Orca's or Betubium's highest peak :
Nurse of a people, in Misfortune's school
Train'd up to hardy deeds ; soon visited
By Learning, when before the gothic rage
She took her western flight. A manly race,
Of unsubmitting spirit, wise, and brave ;
Who still through bleeding ages struggled hard,
(As well unhappy Wallace can attest,
Great patriot-hero ! ill requited chief !)
To hold a generous undiminish'd state ;
Too much in vain ! Hence of unequal bounds
Impatient, and by tempting glory borne
O'er every land, for every land their life
Has flow'd profuse, their piercing genius plann'd,
And swell'd the pomp of peace their faithful toil.
As from their own clear north, in radiant streams,
Bright over Europe bursts the boreal morn.

Oh ! is there not some patriot, in whose power
That best, that godlike luxury is placed,
Of blessing thousands, thousands yet unborn,
Through late posterity ? some, large of soul,
To cheer dejected industry ? to give
A double harvest to the pining swain ?
And teach the labouring hand the sweets of toil ?
How, by the finest art, the native robe
To weave ; how white as hyperborean snow,
To form the lucid lawn ; with venturous oar
How to dash wide the billow ; nor look on,
Shamefully passive while Batavian fleets

Defraud us of the glittering finny swarms,
That heave our friths, and crowd upon our shores;
How all-enlivening trade to rouse, and wing
The prosperous sail, from every growing port,
Uninjured, round the sea-encircled globe;
And thus, in soul united as in name,
Bid Britain reign the mistress of the deep?

Yes, there are such. And full on thee, Argyle,
Her hope, her stay, her darling, and her boast,
From her first patriots and her heroes sprung,
Thy fond imploring country turns her eye;
In thee with all a mother's triumph, sees
Her every virtue, every grace combined,
Her genius, wisdom, her engaging turn,
Her pride of honour, and her courage tried,
Calm, and intrepid, in the very throat
Of sulphurous war, on Tenier's dreadful field.
Nor less the palm of peace inwreathes thy brow:
For, powerful as thy sword, from thy rich tongue
Persuasion flows, and wins the high debate;
While mix'd in thee combine the charm of youth,
The force of manhood, and the depth of age.
Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth sincere, as weeping friendship kind,
Thee, truly generous, and in silence great,
Thy country feels through her reviving arts,
Plann'd by thy wisdom, by thy soul inform'd;
And seldom has she known a friend like thee.

But see the fading many-colour'd woods,

Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, dusk, and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To sooty dark. These now the lonesome Muse,
Low whispering, lead into their leaf-strown walks,
And give the Season in its latest view.

Meantime, light shadowing all, a sober calm
Fleeces unbounded ether: whose least wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current: while illumined wide,
The dewy-skirted clouds imbibe the sun,
And through their lucid veil his soften'd force
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time,
For those whom Wisdom and whom Nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degenerate crowd,
And soar above this little scene of things:
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their feet;
To soothe the throbbing passions into peace;
And woo lone Quiet in her silent walks.

Thus solitary, and in pensive guise,
Oft let me wander o'er the russet mead,
And through the sadden'd grove, where scarce is heard
One dying strain, to cheer the woodman's toil.
Haply some widow'd songster pours his plaint,
Far, in faint warblings, through the tawny copse:
While congregated thrushes, linnets, larks,
And each wild throat, whose artless strains so late

Swell'd all the music of the swarming shades,
Robb'd of their tuneful souls, now shivering sit
On the dead tree, a dull despondent flock;
With not a brightness waving o'er their plumes,
And nought save chattering discord in their note.
O let not, aim'd from some inhuman eye,
The gun the music of the coming year
Destroy; and harmless, unsuspecting harm,
Lay the weak tribes a miserable prey,
In mingled murder, fluttering on the ground!

The pale-descending year, yet pleasing still,
A gentler mood inspires; for now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove;
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below,
And slowly circles through the waving air.
But should a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob, o'er the sky the leafy deluge streams;
Till choked, and matted with the dreary shower,
The forest walks, at every rising gale,
Roll wide the wither'd waste, and whistle bleak.
Fled is the blasted verdure of the fields;
And, shrunk into their beds, the flowery race
Their sunny robes resign. E'en what remain'd
Of stronger fruits falls from the naked tree;
And woods, fields, gardens, orchards, all around
The desolated prospect thrills the soul.

He comes! he comes! in every breeze the Power
Of Philosophic Melancholy comes!

His near approach the sudden starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The soften'd feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.
O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes!
Inflames imagination; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.
Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye.
As fast the correspondent passions rise,
As varied, and as high: Devotion raised
To rapture, and divine astonishment;
The love of Nature unconfined, and, chief,
Of human race; the large ambitious wish,
To make them blest; the sigh for suffering worth
Lost in obscurity; the noble scorn
Of tyrant pride; the fearless great resolve;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,
Inspiring glory through remotest time;
The awaken'd throb for virtue, and for fame;
The sympathies of love, and friendship dear;
With all the social offspring of the heart.

Oh! bear me then to vast embowering shades,
To twilight groves, and visionary vales;
To weeping grottos, and prophetic glooms;
Where angel forms athwart the solemn dusk,

Tremendous sweep, or seem to sweep along;
And voices more than human, through the void
Deep sounding, seize the enthusiastic ear?
Or is this gloom too much? Then lead, ye powers,
That o'er the garden and the rural seat
Preside, which shining through the cheerful hand
In countless numbers blest Britannia sees;
O lead me to the wide extended walks,
The fair majestic paradise of Stowe!*
Not Persian Cyrus on Ionia's shore
E'er saw such sylvan scenes; such various art
By genius fired, such ardent genius tamed
By cool judicious art; that, in the strife,
All beauteous Nature fears to be outdone.
And there, O Pitt, thy country's early boast,
There let me sit beneath the shelter'd slopes,
Or in that Temple† where, in future times,
Thou well shalt merit a distinguish'd name;
And, with thy converse blest, catch the last smiles
Of Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods.
While there with thee the enchanted round I walk,
The regulated wild, gay Fancy then
Will tread in thought the groves of attic land;
Will from thy standard taste refine her own,
Correct her pencil to the purest truth
Of Nature, or, the unimpassion'd shades

* The seat of Lord Cobham.

† The Temple of Virtue in Stowe Gardens.

Forsaking, raise it to the human mind.
Or if hereafter she, with juster hand,
Shall draw the tragic scene, instruct her, thou,
To mark the varied movements of the heart,
What every decent character requires,
And every passion speaks: O through her strain
Breathe thy pathetic eloquence! that moulds
The attentive senate, charms, persuades, exalts,
Of honest Zeal the indignant lightning throws,
And shakes Corruption on her venal throne.
While thus we talk, and through Elysian vales
Delighted rove, perhaps a sigh escapes:
What pity, Cobham, thou thy verdant files
Of order'd trees shouldst here inglorious range,
Instead of squadrons flaming o'er the field,
And long embattled hosts! when the proud foe,
The faithless vain disturber of mankind,
Insulting Gaul, has roused the world to war;
When keen, once more, within their bounds to press
Those polish'd robbers, those ambitious slaves,
The British youth would hail thy wise command,
Thy temper'd ardour and thy veteran skill.

The western sun withdraws the shorten'd day;
And humid Evening, gliding o'er the sky,
In her chill progress, to the ground condensed
The vapours throws. Where creeping waters ooze,
Where marshes stagnate, and where rivers wind,
Cluster the rolling fogs, and swim along
The dusky-mantled lawn. Meanwhile the Moon

Full-orb'd, and breaking through the scatter'd clouds,
Shows her broad visage in the crimson'd east.
Turn'd to the sun direct, her spotted disk,
Where mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,
And caverns deep, as optic tube descries,
A smaller earth, gives us his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.
Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime.
Wide the pale deluge floats, and streaming mild
O'er the sky'd mountain to the shadowy vale,
While rocks and floods reflect the quivering gleam,
The whole air whitens with a boundless tide
Of silver radiance, trembling round the world.
But when half blotted from the sky her light,
Fainting, permits the starry fires to burn
With keener lustre through the depth of heaven;
Or near extinct her deaden'd orb appears,
And scarce appears, of sickly beamless white;
Oft in this season, silent from the north
A blaze of meteors shoots; ensweeping first
The lower skies, they all at once converge
High to the crown of heaven, and all at once
Relapsing quick, as quickly reascend,
And mix, and thwart, extinguish, and renew,
All ether coursing in a maze of light.
From look to look, contagious through the crowd,
The panic runs, and into wondrous shapes

The appearance throws: armies in meet array,
Throng'd with aërial spears, and steeds of fire;
Till the long lines of full extended war
In bleeding fight commix'd, the sanguine flood
Rolls a broad slaughter o'er the plains of heaven.
As thus they scan the visionary scene,
On all sides swells the superstitious din,
Incontinent; and busy frenzy talks
Of blood and battle; cities overturn'd,
And late at night in swallowing earthquake sunk,
Or hideous wrapt in fierce ascending flame;
Of sallow famine, inundation, storm;
Of pestilence, and every great distress;
Empires subversed, when ruling fate has struck
The unalterable hour: e'en Nature's self
Is deem'd to totter on the brink of time.
Not so the man of philosophic eye,
And inspect sage; the waving brightness he
Curious surveys, inquisitive to know
The causes, and materials, yet unfix'd,
Of this appearance beautiful and new.

Now black, and deep, the night begins to fall,
A shade immense! Sunk in the quenching gloom,
Magnificent and vast, are heaven and earth.
Order confounded lies; all beauty void;
Distinction lost; and gay variety
One universal blot: such the fair power
Of light, to kindle and create the whole.
Drear is the state of the benighted wretch,

Who then, bewilder'd, wanders through the dark,
Full of pale fancies, and chimeras huge;
Nor visited by one directive ray,
From cottage streaming, or from airy hall.
Perhaps impatient as he stumbles on,
Struck from the root of slimy rushes, blue,
The wildfire scatters round, or gather'd trails
A length of flame deceitful o'er the moss:
Whither decoy'd by the fantastic blaze,
Now lost and now renew'd he sinks absorb'd,
Rider and horse, amid the miry gulf:
While still, from day to day, his pining wife
And plaintive children his return await,
In wild conjecture lost. At other times,
Sent by the better Genius of the night,
Innoxious, gleaming on the horse's mane,
The meteor sits; and shows the narrow path,
That winding leads through pits of death, or else
Instructs him how to take the dangerous ford.

The lengthen'd night elapsed, the Morning shines
Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,
Unfolding fair the last autumnal day.
And now the mounting sun dispels the fog;
The rigid hoar frost melts before his beam;
And hung on every spray, on every blade
Of grass, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round.

Ah, see where, robb'd and murder'd, in that pit
Lies the still heaving hive! at evening snatch'd,
Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,

And fix'd o'er sulphur: while, not dreaming ill,
The happy people, in their waxen cells,
Sat tending public cares, and planning schemes
Of temperance, for Winter poor; rejoiced
To mark, full flowing round, their copious stores.
Sudden the dark oppressive steam ascends;
And, used to milder scents, the tender race,
By thousands, tumble from their honey'd domes,
Convolved, and agonizing in the dust.
And was it then for this you roam'd the Spring,
Intent from flower to flower? for this you toil'd
Ceaseless the burning Summer heats away?
For this in Autumn search'd the blooming waste,
Nor lost one sunny gleam? for this sad fate?
O Man! tyrannic lord! how long, how long
Shall prostrate Nature groan beneath your rage,
Awaiting renovation? when obliged,
Must you destroy? of their ambrosial food
Can you not borrow; and, in just return,
Afford them shelter from the wintry winds;
Or, as the sharp year pinches, with their own
Again regale them on some smiling day?
See where the stony bottom of their town
Looks desolate, and wild; with here and there
A helpless number, who the ruin'd state
Survive, lamenting weak, cast out to death.
Thus a proud city, populous and rich,
Full of the works of peace, and high in joy,

At theatre or feast, or sunk in sleep,
(As late, Palermo, was thy fate) is seized
By some dread earthquake, and convulsive hurl'd
Sheer from the black foundation, stench-involved,
Into a gulf of blue sulphureous flame.
Hence every harsher sight! for now the day,
O'er heaven and earth diffused, grows warm, and high;
Infinite splendour! wide investing all.
How still the breeze! save what the filmy thread
Of dew evaporate brushes from the plain.
How clear the cloudless sky? how deeply tinged
With a peculiar blue! the ethereal arch
How swell'd immense! amid whose azure throned
The radiant sun how gay! how calm below
The gilded earth! the harvest-treasures all
Now gather'd in, beyond the rage of storms,
Sure to the swain; the circling fence shut up;
And instant Winter's utmost rage defied.
While, loose to festive joy, the country round
Laughs with the loud sincerity of mirth,
Shook to the wind their cares. The toil-strung youth
By the quick sense of music taught alone,
Leaps wildly graceful in the lively dance.
Her every charm abroad, the village-toast,
Young, buxom, warm, in native beauty rich,
Darts not unmeaning looks; and, where her eye

Points an approving smile, with double force,
The cudgel rattles, and the wrestler twines.
Age too shines out; and, garrulous, recounts
The feats of youth. Thus they rejoice; nor think
That, with to-morrow's sun, their annual toil
Begins again the never ceasing round.
Oh, knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he! who far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retired,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the Rural Life.
What though the dome be wanting, whose proud gate,
Each morning, vomits out the sneaking crowd
Of flatterers false, and in their turn abused?
Vile intercourse! what though the glittering robe
Of every hue reflected light can give,
Or floating loose, or stiff with mazy gold,
The pride and gaze of fools! oppress him not?
What though, from utmost land and sea purvey'd,
For him each rarer tributary life
Bleeds not, and his insatiate table heaps
With luxury, and death? What though his bowl
Flames not with costly juice; nor sunk in beds,
Oft of gay care, he tosses out the night,
Or melts the thoughtless hours in idle state?
What though he knows not those fantastic joys
That still amuse the wanton, still deceive;
A face of pleasure, but a heart of pain;

Their hollow moments undelighted all?
Sure peace is his; a solid life, estranged
To disappointment, and fallacious hope:
Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
In herbs and fruits; whatever greens the Spring,
When heaven descends in showers; or bends the bough,
When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams;
Or in the wintry glebe whatever lies
Conceal'd, and fattens with the richest sap:
These are not wanting; nor the milky drove,
Luxuriant, spread o'er all the lowing vale;
Nor bleating mountains; nor the chide of streams,
And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere
Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade,
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay;
Nor aught besides of prospect, grove, or song,
Dim grottos, gleaming lakes, and fountain clear.
Here too dwells simple Truth; plain Innocence;
Unsullied Beauty; sound unbroken Youth,
Patient of labour, with a little pleased;
Health ever blooming; unambitious Toil;
Calm Contemplation, and poetic Ease.

Let others brave the flood in quest of gain,
And beat, for joyless months, the gloomy wave.
Let such as deem it glory to destroy
Rush into blood, the sack of cities seek;
Unpierced, exulting in the widow's wail,

The virgin's shriek, and infant's trembling cry.
Let some, far distant from their native soil,
Urged or by want or harden'd avarice,
Find other lands beneath another sun.
Let this through cities work his eager way,
By legal outrage and establish'd guile,
The social sense extinct; and that ferment
Mad into tumult the seditious herd,
Or melt them down to slavery. Let these
Insnare the wretched in the toils of law,
Fomenting discord, and perplexing right,
An iron race! and those of fairer front,
But equal inhumanity, in courts,
Delusive pomp and dark cabals, delight;
Wreathe the deep bow, diffuse the lying smile,
And tread the weary labyrinth of state.
While he, from all the stormy passions free
That restless men involve, hears, and but hears,
At distance safe, the human tempest roar,
Wrapp'd close in conscious peace. The fall of kings,
The rage of nations, and the crush of states,
Move not the man, who, from the world escaped,
In still retreats and flowery solitudes,
To Nature's voice attends, from month to month,
And day to day, through the revolving year;
Admiring, sees her in her every shape;
Feels all her sweet emotions at his heart;

Takes what she liberal gives, nor thinks of more.
He, when young Spring protrudes the bursting germs,
Marks the first bud, and sucks the healthful gale
Into his freshen'd soul; her genial hours
He full enjoys; and not a beauty blows,
And not an opening blossom breathes in vain.
In Summer he, beneath the living shade,
Such as o'er frigid Tempè wont to wave,
Or Hemus cool, reads what the Muse, of these,
Perhaps, has in immortal numbers sung;
Or what she dictates writes: and, oft an eye
Shot round, rejoices in the vigorous year.
When Autumn's yellow lustre gilds the world,
And tempts the sickled swain into the field,
Seized by the general joy, his heart distends
With gentle throes; and, through the tepid gleams
Deep musing, then he best exerts his song.
E'en Winter wild to him is full of bliss.
The mighty tempest, and the hoary waste,
Abrupt and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,
Awake to solemn thought. At night the skies,
Disclosed, and kindled, by refining frost,
Pour every lustre on the exalted eye.
A friend, a book, the stealing hours secure,
And mark them down for wisdom. With swift wing
O'er land and sea imagination roams;

Or truth, divinely breaking on his mind,
Elates his being, and unfolds his powers;
Or in his breast heroic virtue burns.
The touch of kindred too and love he feels;
The modest eye, whose beams on his alone
Ecstatic shine; the little strong embrace
Of prattling children, twined around his neck,
And emulous to please him, calling forth
The fond parental soul. Nor purpose gay,
Amusement, dance, or song, he sternly scorns;
For happiness and true philosophy
Are of the social, still, and smiling kind.
This is the life which those who fret in guilt,
And guilty cities, never knew; the life,
Led by primeval ages, uncorrupt,
When Angels dwelt, and God himself, with Man!
Oh Nature! all-sufficient! over all!
Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works!
Snatch me to Heaven; thy rolling wonders there,
World beyond world, in infinite extent,
Profusely scatter'd o'er the blue immense,
Show me; their motions, periods, and their laws
Give me to scan; through the disclosing deep
Light my blind way: the mineral strata there;
Thrust, blooming, thence the vegetable world;
O'er that the rising system, more complex,
Of animals; and higher still, the mind,
The varied scene of quick-compounded thought,

And where the mixing passions endless shift;
These ever open to my ravish'd eye;
A search, the flight of time can ne'er exhaust!
But if to that unequal; if the blood,
In sluggish streams about my heart, forbid
That best ambition; under closing shades,
Inglorious, lay me by the lowly brook,
And whisper to my dreams. From Thee begin,
Dwell all on Thee, with Thee conclude my song;
And let me never, never stray from Thee!

WINTER.

Horrida cano
Bruma gelu.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR SPENCER COMPTON.

SIR,

THE Author of the following Poem begs leave to inscribe this, his first performance, to your name and patronage: unknown himself, and only introduced by the Muse, he yet ventures to approach you, with a modest cheerfulness; for, whoever attempts to excel in any generous art, though he comes alone, and unregarded by the world, may hope for your notice and esteem. Happy if I can, in any degree, merit this good fortune: as every ornament and grace of polite learning is yours, your single approbation will be my fame.

I dare not indulge my heart by dwelling on your public character; on that exalted honour and integrity which distinguish you in that august assembly where you preside, that unshaken loyalty to your sovereign, that disinterested concern for his people which shine out, united, in all your behaviour, and finish the patriot. I am conscious

of my want of strength and skill for so delicate an undertaking; and yet, as the shepherd in his cottage may feel and acknowledge the influence of the sun with as lively a gratitude as the great man in his palace, even I may be allowed to publish my sense of those blessings which, from so many powerful virtues, are derived to the nation they adorn.

I conclude with saying that your fine discernment and humanity, in your private capacity, are so conspicuous that, if this address is not received with some indulgence, it will be a severe conviction that what I have written has not the least share of merit.

I am,

With the profoundest respect,

SIR,

Your most devoted and most faithful

humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

WINTER.

ARGUMENT.

THE subject proposed. Address to the Earl of Wilmington. First approach of Winter. According to the natural course of the Season, various Storms described. Rain. Wind. Snow. The driving of the Snows: a Man perishing among them; whence reflections on the Wants and Miseries of Human Life. The Wolves descending from the Alps and Appenines. A Winter Evening described; as spent by Philosophers; by the Country People; in the City. Frost. A view of Winter within the Polar Circle. A Thaw. The whole concluding with moral reflections on a Future State.

WINTER.

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train;
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme,
These! that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms,
Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless Solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wander'd through your rough domain;
Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd,
In the grim evening sky. Thus pass'd the time,

Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out, and smiled.
To thee, the patron of her first essay,
The Muse, O Wilmington! renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year:
Skimm'd the gay Spring; on eagle-pinions borne,
Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise;
Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy gale;
And now among the wintry clouds again,
Roll'd in the doubling storm, she tries to soar;
To swell her note with all the rushing winds;
To suit her sounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great:
Thrice happy could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description, and with manly thought.
Nor art thou skill'd in awful schemes alone,
And how to make a mighty people thrive;
But equal goodness, sound integrity,
A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul,
Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
Not vainly blazing for thy country's weal,
A steady spirit regularly free;
These, each exalting each, the statesman light
Into the patriot; these, the public hope
And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
Record what envy dares not flattery call.
Now when the cheerless empire of the sky
To Capricorn the Centaur Archer yields,
And fierce Aquarius stains the inverted year;

Hung o'er the farthest verge of Heaven, the sun
Scarce spreads through ether the dejected day.
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Through the thick air; as clothed in cloudy storm,
Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern sky;
And, soon-descending, to the long dark night,
Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.
Nor is the night unwish'd; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy, the dubious day forsake.
Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
Deep-tinged and damp, and congregated clouds,
And all the vapoury turbulence of Heaven,
Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease,
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop; and o'er the furrow'd land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun discolour'd flocks,
Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad Genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling brook
And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening Fancy's ear.
Then comes the father of the tempest forth,

Wrapt in black glooms. First joyless rains obscure.
Drive through the mingling skies with vapour foul;
Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the woods,
That grumbling wave below. The unsightly plain
Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of Heaven,
Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled air,
Or skimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from the untasted fields return,
And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls,
Or ruminate in the contiguous shade.
Thither the household feathery people crowd,
The crested cock, with all his female train,
Pensive, and dripping; while the cottage-hind
Hangs oe'r the enlivening blaze, and taleful there
Recounts his simple frolic: much he talks,
And much he laughs, nor recks the storm that blows
Without, and rattles on his humble roof.

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent swell'd,
And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erspread,
At last the roused-up river pours along:
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain, and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding far;
Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again, constrain'd

Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid stream;
There gathering triple force, rapid, and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the soul!
That sees astonish'd! and astonish'd sings!
Ye too, ye winds! that now begin to blow
With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
Where are your stores, ye powerful beings! say,
Where your aërial magazines reserved,
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm?
In what far distant region of the sky,
Hush'd in deep silence, sleep ye when 'tis calm?

When from the pallid sky the sun descends,
With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb
Uncertain wanders, stain'd; red fiery streaks
Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds
Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet
Which master to obey: while rising slow,
Blank, in the leaden-colour'd east, the moon
Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns.
Seen through the turbid fluctuating air,
The stars obtuse emit a shiver'd ray;
Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.

Snatch'd in short eddies, plays the wither'd leaf;
And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
With broaden'd nostrils to the sky upturn'd,
The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
E'en as the matron, at her nightly task,
With pensive labour draws the flaxen thread,
The wasted taper and the crackling flame
Foretell the blast. But chief the plumy race,
The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They pick'd their scanty fare, a blackening train,
Of clamorous rooks thick urge their weary flight
And seek the closing shelter of the grove;
Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and screams along the land.
Loud shrieks the soaring hern; and with wild wing
The circling seafowl cleave the flaky clouds.
Ocean, unequal press'd, with broken tide
And blind commotion heaves; while from the shore,
Eat into caverns by the restless wave,
And forest-rustling mountain, comes a voice,
That solemn sounding bids the world prepare.
Then issues forth the storm with sudden burst,
And hurls the whole precipitated air
Down in a torrent. On the passive main
Descends the ethereal force, and with strong gust
Turns from its bottom the discolour'd deep.
Through the black night that sits immense around,

Lash'd into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn:
Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult swell'd, surge above surge,
Burst into chaos with tremendous roar,
And anchor'd navies from their stations drive,
Wild as the winds across the howling waste
Of mighty waters: now the inflated wave
Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
Into the secret chambers of the deep,
The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their head.
Emerging thence again, before the breath
Of full exerted Heaven they wing their course,
And dart on distant coasts; if some sharp rock,
Or shoal insidious break not their career,
And in loose fragments fling them floating round.
Nor less at hand the loosen'd tempest reigns.
The mountain thunders; and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shade.
Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark wayfaring stranger breathless toils,
And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vex'd, and sheds
What of its tarnish'd honours yet remain;
Dash'd down, and scatter'd, by the tearing wind's
Assiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
The whirling tempest raves along the plain;
And on the cottage thatch'd, or lordly roof,

Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid base.
Sleep frighted flies; and round the rocking dome,
For entrance eager, howls the savage blast.
Then too, they say, through all the burden'd air,
Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and distant sighs,
That, utter'd by the Demon of the night,
Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.
Huge uproar lords it wide. The clouds commix'd
With stars swift gliding sweep along the sky.
All Nature reels. Till Nature's King, who oft
Amid tempestuous darkness dwells alone,
And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully serene, commands a calm;
Then straight, air, sea, and earth are hush'd at once.
As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary clouds,
Slow meeting, mingle into solid gloom.
Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in sleep,
Let me associate with the serious Night,
And Contemplation her sedate compeer;
Let me shake off the intrusive cares of day,
And lay the meddling senses all aside.
Where now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever tempting ever cheating train!
Where are you now? and what is your amount?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse:
Sad, sickening thought! and yet deluded man,
A scene of crude disjointed visions past,

And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
With new-flush'd hopes, to run the giddy round.
Father of light and life! thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good! teach me Thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit! and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!
The keener tempests rise: and fuming dun
From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend; in whose capacious womb
A vapoury deluge lies, to snow congeal'd.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gather'd storm
Through the hush'd air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast, dimming the day,
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the labourer-ox
Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of Heaven,

Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets, leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is;
Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares and dogs,
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,
Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak Heaven, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispersed,
Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow.
Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind,
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
With food at will; lodge them below the storm,
And watch them strict: for from the bellowing east,
In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains

At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward urged,
The valley to a shining mountain swells,
Tipp'd with a wreath high-curling in the sky.
As thus the snows arise; and foul, and fierce,
All Winter drives along the darken'd air:
In his own loose revolving fields, the swain
Disaster'd stands; sees other hills ascend,
Of unknown joyless brow; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain:
Nor finds the river, nor the forest, hid
Beneath the formless wild; but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray;
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,
Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts of home
Rush on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul!
What black despair, what horror fills his heart!
When for the dusky spot, which fancy feign'd
His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track and bless'd abode of man;
While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
Then throng the busy shapes into his mind,
Of cover'd pits, unfathomably deep,

A dire descent! beyond the power of frost;
Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge,
Smooth'd up with snow; and, what is land, unknown,
What water, of the still unfrozen spring,
In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
Where the fresh mountain from the bottom boils.
These check his fearful steps; and down he sinks,
Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death;
Mix'd with the tender anguish nature shoots
Through the wrung bosom of the dying man,
His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
Nor wife, nor children more shall he behold,
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every nerve
The deadly Winter seizes; shuts up sense;
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows, a stiffen'd corse,
Stretch'd out, and bleaching in the northern blast.
Ah! little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround;
They who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
Ah! little think they, while they dance along,

How many feel, this very moment, death,
And all the sad variety of pain.
How many sink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed,
By shameful variance betwixt man and man.
How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms;
Shut from the common air, and common use
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread
Of misery. Sore pierced by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty. How many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded passion, madness, guilt, remorse;
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of life,
They furnish matter for the tragic Muse.
E'en in the vale, where Wisdom loves to dwell,
With friendship, peace, and contemplation join'd,
How many, rack'd with honest passions, droop
In deep retired distress. How many stand
Around the deathbed of their dearest friends,
And point the parting anguish. Thought fond Man
Of these, and all the thousand nameless ills,
That one incessant struggle render life,
One scene of toil, of suffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would stand appall'd,
And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think;
The conscious heart of Charity would warm,
And her wide wish Benevolence dilate;

The social tear would rise, the social sigh;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
Refining still, the social passions work.
And here can I forget the generous band*,
Who, touch'd with human woe, redressive search'd
Into the horrors of the gloomy jail?
Unpitied, and unheard, where misery moans;
Where sickness pines; where thirst and hunger burn,
And poor misfortune feels the lash of vice.
While in the land of Liberty, the land
Whose every street and public meeting glow
With open freedom, little tyrants raged;
Snatch'd the lean morsel from the starving mouth;
Tore from cold wintry limbs the tatter'd weed;
E'en robb'd them of the last of comforts, sleep;
The free-born Briton to the dungeon chain'd,
Or, as the lust of cruelty prevail'd,
At pleasure mark'd him with inglorious stripes;
And crush'd out lives, by secret barbarous ways,
That for their country would have toil'd or bled.
O great design! if executed well,
With patient care, and wisdom-temper'd zeal.
Ye sons of Mercy! yet resume the search;
Drag forth the legal monsters into light,
Wrench from their hands oppression's iron rod,
And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.
Much still untouch'd remains; in this rank age,

* The jail Committee in the year 1729.

Much is the patriot's weeding hand required.
The toils of law (what dark insidious men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth,
And lengthen simple justice into trade)
How glorious were the day! that saw these broke,
And every man within the reach of right.
By wintry famine roused, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains which the shining Alps,
And wavy Appenine, and Pyrenees,
Branch out stupendous into distant lands;
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood! bony, and gaunt, and grim!
Assembling wolves in raging troops descend;
And, pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north-wind sweeps the glossy snow.
All is their prize. They fasten on the steed,
Press him to earth, and pierce his mighty heart.
Nor can the bull his awful front defend,
Or shake the murdering savages away.
Rapacious, at the mother's throat they fly,
And tear the screaming infant from her breast.
The godlike face of man avails him nought.
E'en beauty, force divine! at whose bright glance
The generous lion stands in soften'd gaze,
Here bleeds, a hapless undistinguish'd prey.
But if, apprized of the severe attack,
The country be shut up, lured by the scent,
On churchyards drear (inhuman to relate!)
The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig

The shrouded body from the grave; o'er which,
Mix'd with foul shades, and frighted ghosts, they howl.

Among those hilly regions, where embraced
In peaceful vales the happy Grisons dwell;
Oft, rushing sudden from the loaded cliffs,
Mountains of snow their gathering terrors roll.
From steep to steep, loud-thundering down they come,
A wintry waste in dire commotion all;
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and swains,
And sometimes whole brigades of marching troops,
Or hamlets sleeping in the dead of night,
Are deep beneath the smothering ruin whelm'd.

Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while without
The ceaseless winds blow ice, be my retreat,
Between the groaning forest and the shore
Beat by the boundless multitude of waves,
A rural, shelter'd, solitary, scene;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join,
To cheer the gloom. There studious let me sit,
And hold high converse with the mighty Dead;
Sages of ancient time, as gods revered,
As gods beneficent, who bless'd mankind
With arts, with arms, and humanized a world.
Roused at the inspiring thought, I throw aside
The long-lived volume; and, deep-musing, hail
The sacred shades, that slowly rising pass

Before my wondering eyes. First Socrates,
Who, firmly good in a corrupted state,
Against the rage of tyrants single stood,
Invincible! calm Reason's holy law,
That Voice of God within the attentive mind,
Obeying, fearless, or in life, or death:
Great moral teacher! Wisest of mankind!
Solon the next, who built his common-weal
On equity's wide base; by tender laws
A lively people curbing, yet undamp'd;
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,
Whence in the laurel'd field of finer arts
And of bold freedom, they unequal'd shone,
The pride of smiling Greece, and human-kind.
Lycurgus then, who bow'd beneath the force
Of strictest discipline, severely wise,
All human passions. Following him, I see,
As at Thermopylæ he glorious fell,
The firm devoted chief,* who proved by deeds
The hardest lesson which the other taught.
Then Aristides lifts his honest front;
Spotless of heart, to whom the unflattering voice
Of freedom gave the noblest name of Just;
In pure majestic poverty revered;
Who, e'en his glory to his country's weal
Submitting, swell'd a haughty Rival's† fame.
Rear'd by his care, of softer ray appears

* Leonidas. † Themistocles.

Cimon sweet-soul'd; whose genius, rising strong,
Shook off the load of young debauch; abroad
The scourge of Persian pride, at home the friend
Of every worth and every splendid art;
Modest, and simple, in the pomp of wealth.
Then the last worthies of declining Greece,
Late call'd to glory, in unequal times,
Pensive appear. The fair Corinthian boast,
Timoleon, happy temper! mild, and firm,
Who wept the brother while the tyrant bled.
And, equal to the best, the Theban Pair,*
Whose virtues, in heroic concord join'd,
Their country raised to freedom, empire, fame.
He too, with whom Athenian honour sunk,
And left a mass of sordid lees behind,
Phocion the Good; in public life severe,
To virtue still inexorably firm;
But when, beneath his low illustrious roof,
Sweet peace and happy wisdom smooth'd his brow,
Not friendship softer was, nor love more kind.
And he, the last of old Lycurgus' sons,
The generous victim to that vain attempt,
To save a rotten state, Agis, who saw
E'en Sparta's self to servile avarice sunk,
The two Achaian heroes close the train:
Aratus, who awhile relumed the soul
Of fondly lingering liberty in Greece;

* Pelopidas and Epaminondas.

And he her darling as her latest hope,
The gallant Philopœmen; who to arms
Turn'd the luxurious pomp he could not cure;
Or toiling in his farm, a simple swain;
Or, bold and skilful, thundering in the field.
Of rougher front, a mighty people come!
A race of heroes! in those virtuous times
Which knew no stain, save that with partial flame
Their dearest country they too fondly loved:
Her better Founder first, the light of Rome,
Numa, who soften'd her rapacious sons:
Servius the king, who laid the solid base
On which o'er earth the vast republic spread.
Then the great consuls venerable rise.
The public Father* who the private quell'd,
As on the dread tribunal sternly sad.
He, whom his thankless country could not lose,
Camillus, only vengeful to her foes.
Fabricius, scorner of all-conquering gold;
And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough.
Thy willing victim,† Carthage, bursting loose
From all that pleading Nature could oppose,
From a whole city's tears, by rigid faith
Imperious call'd, and honour's dire command.
Scipio, the gentle chief, humanely brave,
Who soon the race of spotless glory ran,
And, warm in youth, to the poetic shade

* Marcus Junius Brutus. † Regulus.

With Friendship and Philosophy retired.
Tully, whose powerful eloquence a while
Restrain'd the rapid fate of rushing Rome.
Unconquer'd Cato, virtuous in extreme:
And thou, unhappy Brutus, kind of heart,
Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urged,
Lifted the Roman steel against thy friend.
Thousands besides the tribute of a verse
Demand; but who can count the stars of Heaven?
Who sing their influence on this lower world?
Behold, who yonder comes! in sober state,
Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun:
'Tis Phœbus' self, or else the Mantuan Swain!
Great Homer too appears, of daring wing,
Parent of song! and equal by his side,
The British Muse: join'd hand in hand they walk,
Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame,
Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful touch
Pathetic drew the impassion'd heart, and charm'd
Transported Athens with the moral scene;
Nor those who, tuneful, waked the enchanting lyre.
First of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserved,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.
Silence, thou lonely power! the door be thine;
See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude,
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refined,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,

Unstudied wit, and humour ever gay.
Or from the Muses' hill will Pope descend,
To raise the sacred hour, to bid it smile,
And with the social spirit warm the heart?
For though not sweeter his own Homer sings,
Yet is his life the more endearing song.
Where art thou, Hammond? thou, the darling pride,
The friend and lover of the tuneful throng!
Ah why, dear youth, in all the blooming prime
Of vernal genius, where disclosing fast
Each active worth, each manly virtue lay,
Why wert thou ravish'd from our hope so soon?
What now avails that noble thirst of fame,
Which stung thy fervent breast? that treasured store
Of knowledge early gain'd? that eager zeal
To serve thy country, glowing in the band
Of youthful patriots, who sustain her name;
What now, alas! that life-diffusing charm
Of sprightly wit? that rapture for the Muse,
That heart of friendship, and that soul of joy,
Which bade with softest light thy virtues smile?
Ah! only show'd, to check our fond pursuits,
And teach our humbled hopes that life is vain!
Thus in some deep retirement would I pass
The winter-glooms, with friends of pliant soul,
Or blithe, or solemn, as the theme inspired:

With them would search, if Nature's boundless frame
Was call'd, late-rising from the void of night,
Or sprung eternal from the Eternal Mind;
Its life, its laws, its progress, and its end.
Hence larger prospects of the beauteous whole
Would, gradual, open on our opening minds;
And each diffusive harmony unite
In full perfection, to the astonish'd eye.
Then would we try to scan the moral world,
Which, though to us it seems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted and impell'd
By Wisdom's finest hand, and issuing all
In general good. The sage historic Muse
Should next conduct us through the deeps of time:
Show us how empire grew, declined, and fell,
In scatter'd states; what makes the nations smile,
Improves their soil, and gives them double suns;
And why they pine beneath the brightest skies,
In Nature's richest lap. As thus we talk'd,
Our hearts would burn within us, would inhale
That portion of divinity, that ray
Of purest Heaven, which lights the public soul
Of patriots and of heroes. But if doom'd,
In powerless humble fortune, to repress
These ardent risings of the kindling soul;
Then, even superior to ambition, we
Would learn the private virtues; how to glide

Through shades and plains, along the smoothest stream
Of rural life: or snatch'd away by hope,
Through the dim spaces of futurity,
With earnest eye anticipate those scenes
Of happiness and wonder; where the mind,
In endless growth and infinite ascent,
Rises from state to state, and world to world.
But when with these the serious thought is foil'd,
We, shifting for relief, would play the shapes
Of frolic fancy; and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never join'd before,
Whence lively Wit excites to gay surprise;
Or folly-painting Humour, grave himself,
Calls Laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve.
Meantime the village rouses up the fire;
While well attested, and as well believed,
Heard solemn, goes the goblin story round;
Till superstitious horror creeps o'er all.
Or, frequent in the sounding hall, they wake
The rural gambol. Rustic mirth goes round;
The simple joke that takes the shepherd's heart,
Easily pleased; the long loud laugh, sincere;
The kiss, snatch'd hasty from the side-long maid,
On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep:
The leap, the slap, the haul; and, shook to notes
Of native music, the respondent dance.
Thus jocund fleets with them the winter-night.

The city swarms intense. The public haunt,
Full of each theme and warm with mix'd discourse,
Hums indistinct. The sons of riot flow
Down the loose stream of false enchanted joy,
To swift destruction. On the rankled soul
The gaming fury falls; and in one gulf
Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace,
Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.
Upsprings the dance along the lighted dome,
Mix'd and evolved, a thousand sprightly ways.
The glittering court effuses every pomp;
The circle deepens: beam'd from gaudy robes,
Tapers, and sparkling gems, and radiant eyes,
A soft effulgence o'er the palace waves:
While, a gay insect in his summer-shine,
The fop, light fluttering, spreads his mealy wings.
Dread o'er the scene, the ghost of Hamlet stalks;
Othello rages; poor Monimia mourns;
And Belvidera pours her soul in love.
Terror alarms the breast; the comely tear
Steals o'er the cheek: or else the Comic Muse
Holds to the world a picture of itself,
And raises sly the fair impartial laugh.
Sometimes she lifts her strain, and paints the scenes
Of beauteous life; whate'er can deck mankind,
Or charm the heart, in generous Bevil* show'd.

* A character in the Conscious Lovers, by Sir R. Steele.

O Thou, whose wisdom, solid yet refined,
Whose patriot-virtues, and consummate skill
To touch the finer springs that move the world,
Join'd to whate'er the Graces can bestow,
And all Apollo's animating fire,
Give thee, with pleasing dignity, to shine
At once the guardian, ornament, and joy,
Of polish'd life; permit the rural Muse,
O Chesterfield, to grace with thee her song!
Ere to the shades again she humbly flies,
Indulge her fond ambition, in thy train,
(For every Muse has in thy train a place)
To mark thy various full-accomplish'd mind:
To mark that spirit, which, with British scorn,
Rejects the allurements of corrupted power;
That elegant politeness, which excels,
E'en in the judgment of presumptuous France,
The boasted manners of her shining court;
That with the vivid energy of sense,
The truth of Nature, which with Attic point
And kind well temper'd satire, smoothly keen,
Steals through the soul, and without pain corrects.
Or rising thence with yet a brighter flame,
O let me hail thee on some glorious day,
When to the listening senate, ardent, crowd
Britannia's sons to hear her pleaded cause.
Then dress'd by thee, more amiably fair,
Truth the soft robe of mild persuasion wears:

Thou to assenting reason givest again
Her own enlighten'd thoughts; call'd from the heart,
The obedient passions on thy voice attend;
And e'en reluctant party feels a while
Thy gracious power: as through the varied maze
Of eloquence, now smooth, now quick, now strong,
Profound and clear, you roll the copious flood.

To thy loved haunt return, my happy Muse:
For now, behold, the joyous winter days,
Frosty, succeed; and through the blue serene,
For sight too fine, the ethereal nitre flies;
Killing infectious damps, and the spent air
Storing afresh with elemental life.
Close crowds the shining atmosphere; and binds
Our strengthen'd bodies in its cold embrace,
Constringent; feeds, and animates our blood;
Refines our spirits, through the new-strung nerves,
In swifter sallies darting to the brain;
Where sits the soul, intense, collected, cool,
Bright as the skies, and as the season keen.
All Nature feels the renovating force
Of Winter, only to the thoughtless eye
In ruin seen. The frost-concocted glebe
Draws in abundant vegetable soul,
And gathers vigour for the coming year,
A stronger glow sits on the lively cheek
Of ruddy fire: and luculent along

The purer rivers flow; their sullen deeps,
Transparent, open to the shepherd's gaze,
And murmur hoarser at the fixing frost.
What art thou, frost? and whence are thy keen stores
Derived, thou secret all-invading power,
Whom e'en the illusive fluid cannot fly?
Is not thy potent energy, unseen,
Myriads of little salts, or hook'd, or shaped
Like double wedges, and diffused immense
Through water, earth, and ether? hence at eve,
Steam'd eager from the red horizon round,
With the fierce rage of Winter deep suffused,
An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arrests the bickering stream. The loosen'd ice,
Let down the flood, and half dissolved by day,
Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank
Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
A crystal pavement, by the breath of Heaven
Cemented firm; till, seized from shore to shore,
The whole imprison'd river growls below.
Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
A double noise; while, at his evening watch,
The village dog deters the nightly thief;
The heifer lows; the distant water-fall
Swells in the breeze; and, with the hasty tread
Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain
Shakes from afar. The full ethereal round,

Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
Shines out intensely keen; and, all one cope
Of starry glitter, glows from pole to pole.
From pole to pole the rigid influence falls,
Through the still night, incessant, heavy, strong,
And seizes Nature fast. It freezes on;
Till Morn, late-rising o'er the drooping world,
Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears
The various labour of the silent night:
Prone from the dripping eave, and dumb cascade,
Whose idle torrents only seem to roar,
The pendent icicle; the frost-work fair,
Where transient hues, and fancied figures rise;
Wide-spouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
A livid tract, cold-gleaming on the morn;
The forest bent beneath the plumy wave;
And by the frost refined the whiter snow,
Incrusted hard, and sounding to the tread
Of early shepherd, as he pensive seeks
His pining flock, or from the mountain top,
Pleased with the slippery surface, swift descends.
On blithsome frolics bent, the youthful swains,
While every work of man is laid at rest,
Fond o'er the river crowd, in various sport
And revelry dissolved; where mixing glad,
Happiest of all the train! the raptured boy
Lashes the whirling top. Or, where the Rhine
Branch'd out in many a long canal extends,
From every province swarming, void of care,

Batavia rushes forth; and as they sweep,
On sounding skates, a thousand different ways,
In circling poise, swift as the winds, along,
The then gay land is madden'd all to joy.
Nor less the northern courts, wide o'er the snow,
Pour a new pomp. Eager, on rapid sleds,
Their vigorous youth in bold contention wheel
The long-resounding course. Meantime to raise
The manly strife, with highly blooming charms,
Flush'd by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
Or Russia's buxom daughters, glow around.

Pure, quick, and sportful is the wholesome day;
But soon elapsed. The horizontal sun,
Broad o'er the south, hangs at his utmost noon:
And, ineffectual, strikes the gelid cliff:
His azure gloss the mountain still maintains,
Nor feels the feeble touch. Perhaps the vale
Relents awhile to the reflected ray:
Or from the forest falls the cluster'd snow,
Myriads of gems, that in the waving gleam
Gay-twinkle as they scatter. Thick around
Thunders the sport of those, who with the gun,
And dog impatient bounding at the shot,
Worse than the Season, desolate the fields;
And, adding to the ruins of the year,
Distress the footed or the feather'd game.

But what is this? our infant Winter sinks,
Divested of his grandeur, should our eye
Astonish'd shoot into the frigid zone;

Where, for relentless months, continual Night
Holds o'er the glittering waste her starry reign.
There, through the prison of unbounded wilds,
Barr'd by the hand of Nature from escape,
Wide roams the Russian exile. Nought around
Strikes his sad eye, but deserts lost in snow;
And heavy-loaded groves; and solid floods,
That stretch athwart the solitary waste,
Their icy horrors to the frozen main;
And cheerless towns far distant, never bless'd,
Save when its annual course the caravan
Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay,*
With news of human-kind. Yet there life glows;
Yet cherish'd there, beneath the shining waste,
The furry nations harbour: tipp'd with jet,
Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they press;
Sables, of glossy black; and dark-embrown'd,
Or beauteous freak'd with many a mingled hue,
Thousands besides, the costly pride of courts.
There, warm together press'd, the trooping deer
Sleep on the new-fallen snows; and, scarce his head
Raised o'er the heapy wreath, the branching elk
Lies slumbering sullen in the white abyss.
The ruthless hunter wants nor dogs nor toils,
Nor with the dread of sounding bows he drives
The fearful flying race; with ponderous clubs,

* The old name for China.

As weak against the mountain-heaps they push
Their beating breast in vain, and piteous bray,
He lays them quivering on the ensanguined snows,
And with loud shouts rejoicing bears them home.
There through the piny forest half-absorp'd,
Rough tenant of these shades, the shapeless bear,
With dangling ice all horrid, stalks forlorn;
Slow-paced, and sourer as the storms increase,
He makes his bed beneath the inclement drift,
And, with stern patience, scorning weak complaint,
Hardens his heart against assailing want.

Wide o'er the spacious regions of the north,
That see Boötes urge his tardy wain,
A boisterous race, by frosty Caurus* pierced,
Who little pleasure know and fear no pain,
Prolific swarm. They once relumed the flame
Of lost mankind in polish'd slavery sunk;
Drove martial horde on horde,† with dreadful sweep
Resistless rushing o'er the enfeebled south,
And gave the vanquish'd world another form.
Not such the sons of Lapland: wisely they
Despise the insensate barbarous trade of war;
They ask no more than simple Nature gives,
They love their mountains, and enjoy their storms.
No false desires, no pride-created wants,
Disturb the peaceful current of their time;
And through the restless ever tortured maze

* North-west wind. † The wandering Scythian clans.

Of pleasure, or ambition, bid it rage.
Their reindeer form their riches. These their tents,
Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
Supply, their wholesome fare and cheerful cups.
Obsequious at their call, the docile tribe
Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl them swift
O'er hill and dale, heap'd into one expanse
Of marbled snow, as far as eye can sweep
With a blue crust of ice unbounded glazed.
By dancing meteors then, that ceaseless shake
A waving blaze refracted o'er the heavens,
And vivid moons, and stars that keener play
With doubled lustre from the glossy waste,
E'en in the depth of polar night, they find
A wondrous day: enough to light the chase,
Or guide their daring steps to Finland fairs.
Wish'd Spring returns; and from the hazy south,
While dim Aurora slowly moves before,
The welcome sun, just verging up at first,
By small degrees extends the swelling curve!
Till seen at last for gay rejoicing months,
Still round and round, his spiral course he winds,
And as he nearly dips his flaming orb,
Wheels up again, and reascends the sky.
In that glad season from the lakes and floods,
Where pure Niemi's* fairy mountains rise,

* M. de Maupertuis, in his book on the Figure of the Earth, after having described the beautiful lake and moun-

And fringed with roses Tenglio* rolls his stream,
They draw the copious fry. With these, at eve,
They cheerful loaded to their tents repair;
Where, all day long in useful cares employ'd,
Their kind unblemish'd wives the fire prepare.
Thrice happy race! by poverty secured
From legal plunder and rapacious power:
In whom fell interest never yet has sown
The seeds of vice: whose spotless swains ne'er knew
Injurious deed, nor, blasted by the breath
Of faithless love, their blooming daughters woe.
Still pressing on, beyond Tornea's lake,
And Hecla flaming through a waste of snow,
And farthest Greenland, to the pole itself,
Where, failing gradual, life at length goes out,
The Muse expands her solitary flight;
And, hovering o'er the wild stupendous scene,
Beholds new seas beneath another sky.†
Throned in his palace of cerulean ice,

tain of Niemi, in Lapland, says, "From this height we had opportunity several times to see those vapours rise from the lake, which the people of the country call Haltios, and which they deem to be the guardian spirits of the mountains. We had been frighted with stories of bears that haunted this place, but saw none. It seemed rather a place of resort for fairies and genii, than bears."

* The same author observes, "I was surprised to see upon the banks of this river (the Tenglio) roses of as lively a red as any that are in our gardens."

† The other hemisphere.

Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court;
And through his airy hall the loud misrule
Of driving tempest is for ever heard:
Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath;
Here arms his winds with all subduing frost;
Moulds his fierce hail, and treasures up his snows,
With which he now oppresses half the globe.

Thence winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main;
Where undissolving, from the first of time,
Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky;
And icy mountains high on mountains piled,
Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Projected huge, and horrid o'er the surge,
Alps frown on Alps; or rushing hideous down,
As if old Chaos was again return'd,
Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury: but, in all its rage
Of tempest taken by the boundless frost,
Is many a fathom to the bottom chain'd,
And bid to roar no more: a bleak expanse,
Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies conscious southward. Miserable they!
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun;
While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,

The long long night, incumbent o'er their heads,
Falls horrible. Such was the Briton's * fate,
As with first prow, (what have not Britons dared!)
He for the passage sought, attempted since
So much in vain, and seeming to be shut
By jealous Nature with eternal bars.
In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,
And to the stony deep his idle ship
Immediate seal'd, he with his hapless crew
Each full exerted at his several task,
Froze into statues; to the cordage glued
The sailor, and the pilot to the helm.
Hard by these shores, where scarce his freezing stream
Rolls the wild Oby, live the last of men;
And half enliven'd by the distant sun,
That rears and ripens man, as well as plants,
Here human nature wears its rudest form.
Deep from the piercing season sunk in caves,
Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,
They waste the tedious gloom. Immersed in furs,
Doze the gross race. Nor sprightly jest nor song,
Nor tenderness they know; nor aught of life,
Beyond the kindred bears that stalk without,
Till morn at length, her roses drooping all,
Sheds a long twilight brightening o'er their fields,

* Sir Hugh Willoughby, sent by Queen Elizabeth to discover the north-east passage.

And calls the quiver'd savage to the chase.
What cannot active government perform,
New-moulding man? Wide-stretching from these shores,
A people savage from remotest time,
A huge neglected empire, one vast mind,
By Heaven inspired, from gothic darkness call'd.
Immortal Peter! first of monarchs! he
His stubborn country tamed, her rocks, her fens,
Her floods, her seas, her ill-submitting sons;
And while the fierce barbarian he subdued,
To more exalted soul he raised the man.
Ye shades of ancient heroes, ye who toil'd
Through long successive ages to build up
A labouring plan of state, behold at once
The wonder done! behold the matchless prince!
Who left his native throne, where reign'd till then
A mighty shadow of unreal power;
Who greatly spurn'd the slothful pomp of courts;
And roaming every land, in every port
His sceptre laid aside, with glorious hand
Unwearied plying the mechanic tool,
Gather'd the seeds of trade, of useful arts,
Of civil wisdom, and of martial skill.
Charged with the stores of Europe home he goes!
Then cities rise amid the illumined waste;
O'er joyless deserts smiles the rural reign;
Far distant flood to flood is social join'd;
The astonish'd Euxine hears the Baltic roar;

Proud navies ride on seas that never foam'd
With daring keel before; and armies stretch
Each way their dazzling files, repressing here
The frantic Alexander of the north,
And awing there stern Othman's shrinking sons.
Sloth flies the land, and Ignorance, and Vice,
Of old dishonour proud: it glows around,
Taught by the Royal Hand that roused the whole,
One scene of arts, of arms, of rising trade:
For what his wisdom plann'd, and power enforced,
More potent still, his great example show'd.

Muttering, the winds at eve, with blunted point,
Blow hollow blustering from the south. Subdued,
The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.
Spotted the mountains shine; loose sleet descends,
And floods the country round. The rivers swell,
Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once;
And, where they rush, the wide resounding plain
Is left one slimy waste. Those sullen seas,
That wash'd the ungenial pole, will rest no more
Beneath the shackles of the mighty north;
But, rousing all their waves, resistless heave.
And hark! the lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep: at once it bursts,
And piles a thousand mountains to the clouds.
Ill fares the bark with trembling wretches charged,
That, toss'd amid the floating fragments, moors

Beneath the shelter of an icy isle,
While night o'erwhelms the sea, and horror looks
More horrible. Can human force endure
The assembled mischiefs that besiege them round?
Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting weariness,
The roar of winds and waves, the crush of ice,
Now ceasing, now renew'd with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main.
More to embroil the deep, leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful sport,
Tempest the loosen'd brine, while through the gloom,
Far from the bleak inhospitable shore,
Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famish'd monsters, there awaiting wrecks.
Yet Providence, that ever waking eye,
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals lost to hope, and lights them safe,
Through all this dreary labyrinth of fate.
'Tis done! dread Winter spreads his latest glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd Year.
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! horror wide extends
His desolate domain. Behold, fond man!
See here thy pictured life; pass some few years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent strength,
Thy sober Autumn fading into age,
And pale concluding Winter comes at last,

And shuts the scene. Ah! whither now are fled
Those dreams of greatness? those unsolid hopes
Of happiness? those longings after fame?
Those restless cares? those busy bustling days?
Those gay-spent, festive nights? those veering thoughts,
Lost between good and ill, that shared thy life?
All now are vanish'd! Virtue sole survives,
Immortal never failing friend of man,
His guide to happiness on high. And see!
'Tis come, the glorious morn! the second birth
Of heaven and earth! awakening Nature hears
The new creating word, and starts to life,
In every heighten'd form, from pain and death
For ever free. The great eternal scheme,
Involving all, and in a perfect whole
Uniting, as the prospect wider spreads,
To reason's eye refined clear up apace.
Ye vainly wise! ye blind presumptuous! now,
Confounded in the dust, adore that Power
And Wisdom oft arraign'd: see now the cause,
Why unassuming worth in secret lived,
And died, neglected: why the good man's share
In life was gall and bitterness of soul:
Why the lone widow and her orphans pined
In starving solitude; while luxury,
In palaces, lay straining her low thought,
To form unreal wants: why heaven-born truth,
And moderation fair, wore the red marks

Of superstition's scourge: why licensed pain,
That cruel spoiler, that embosom'd foe,
Embitter'd all our bliss. Ye good distress'd!
Ye noble few! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up a while,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem'd evil is no more:
The storms of Wintry Time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded Spring encircle all.

HYMN.

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
Thy beauty walks, thy tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense, and every heart is joy.
Then comes thy glory in the Summer-months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year:
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks:
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales
Thy bounty shines in Autumn unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd.
Majestic darkness! on the whirlwind's wing,
Riding sublime, Thou bidst the world adore,
And humblest Nature with thy northern blast.

Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep felt, in these appear! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mix'd, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined;
Shade, unperceived, so softening into shade;
And all so forming an harmonious whole;
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But wandering oft, with brute unconscious gaze,
Man marks not Thee, marks not the mighty hand,
That, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres;
Works in the secret deep; shoots, steaming, thence
The fair profusion that o'erspreads the Spring:
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day;
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempest forth;
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life.

Nature attend! join, every living soul,
Beneath the spacious temple of the sky,
In adoration join; and, ardent, raise
One general song! To Him, ye vocal gales,
Breathe soft, whose Spirit in your freshness breathes:
Oh, talk of Him in solitary glooms!
Where, o'er the rock, the scarcely waving pine
Fills the brown shade with a religious awe.
And ye, whose bolder note is heard afar,
Who shake the astonish'd world, lift high to heaven
The impetuous song, and say from whom you rage.
His praise, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills;

And let me catch it as I muse along.
Ye headlong torrents, rapid, and profound;
Ye softer floods, that lead the humid maze
Along the vale; and thou, majestic main,
A secret world of wonders in thyself,
Sound His stupendous praise; whose greater voice
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall.
Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
In mingled clouds to Him; whose sun exalts,
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints,
Ye forests, bend, ye harvests, wave, to Him;
Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart,
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth asleep
Unconscious lies, effuse your mildest beams,
Ye constellations, while your angels strike,
Amid the spangled sky, the silver lyre.
Great source of day! best image here below
Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide,
From world to world, the vital ocean round,
On Nature write with every beam His praise.
The thunder rolls: be hush'd the prostrate world:
While cloud to cloud returns the solemn hymn.
Bleat out afresh, ye hills: ye mossy rocks,
Retain the sound: the broad responsive low,
Ye valleys, raise; for the Great Shepherd reigns;
And his unsuffering kingdom yet will come.

Ye woodlands all, awake: a boundless song
Burst from the groves! and when the restless day,
Expiring, lays the warbling world asleep,
Sweetest of birds! sweet Philomela, charm
The listening shades, and teach the night His praise.
Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles,
At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
Crown the great hymn; in swarming cities vast,
Assembled men, to the deep organ join
The long resounding voice, oft-breaking clear,
At solemn pauses, through the swelling base;
And, as each mingling flame increases each,
In one united ardour rise to heaven.
Or if you rather choose the rural shade,
And find a fane in every sacred grove;
There let the shepherd's flute, the virgin's lay,
The prompting seraph, and the poet's lyre,
Still sing the God of Seasons, as they roll!
For me, when I forget the darling theme,
Whether the blossom blows, the summer-ray
Russets the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams;
Or Winter rises in the blackening east;
Be my tongue mute, may fancy paint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!

Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles; 'tis nought to me:

Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers,
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs, and all their sons;
From seeming Evil still educing Good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!
Come then, expressive Silence, muse his praise.

SPECIMEN OF THE ALTERATIONS

MADE BY THOMSON IN THE EARLY EDITIONS OF THE SEASONS.

'Tis done!—dread Winter *has subdu'd the Year*,
And reigns, tremendous, o'er *the desart plains!*
How dead the Vegetable Kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! Horror wide extends
His *solitary empire—now*, fond Man!
Behold thy pictur'd life: Pass some few Years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy *short-liv'd Summer's* strength,
Thy sober Autumn, fading into age,
And pale, concluding Winter *shuts thy scene*,
And *shrouds Thee in the Grave*. *Where now* are fled
Those Dreams of Greatness? those unsolid Hopes
Of Happiness? those longings after Fame?
Those restless Cares? those busy, bustling Days?
Those *Nights of secret Guilt?* those veering thoughts,
Fluttering 'twixt Good, and Ill, that shar'd thy Life?
All, now, are vanish'd! Virtue, sole, survives
Immortal, *Mankind's never-failing Friend*,
His Guide to Happiness on high—and see!
'Tis come, the Glorious Morn! the second Birth
Of Heaven, and Earth!—awakening Nature hears
Th' *Almighty Trumpet's Voice*, and starts to Life,
Renew'd, unfading. *Now, th'* Eternal Scheme,
That Dark Perplexity, that Mystic maze,
Which Sight cou'd never trace, nor Heart conceive,
To Reason's Eye, refin'd, clears up apace.
Angels, and Men, astonish'd pause—and dread
To travel thro' the Depths of Providence,
Untry'd, unbounded. *Ye vain learned! see*,
And, prostrate in the Dust, adore that Power,
And *Goodness*, oft arraign'd. See now the cause,

Why *conscious* worth, *oppress'd, in secret, long,*
Mourn'd, unregarded: why the good Man's share
In Life, was Gall, and Bitterness of Soul:
Why the lone Widow, and her Orphans, pin'd,
In starving Solitude; while Luxury,
In Palaces, lay *prompting* her low thought
To form unreal Wants: Why Heaven-born *Faith,*
And *Charity, prime Grace,* wore the red marks
Of *Persecution's* Scourge: Why licens'd Pain
That cruel Spoiler, that embosom'd Foe,
Imbitter'd all our Bliss. Ye Good Distrest!
Ye noble Few! *that* here, unbending, stand
Beneath Life's Pressures—yet *a little* while,
And all your woes are past. Time swiftly fleets,
And wish'd Eternity, approaching, brings
Life undecaying, Love without Allay,
Pure flowing Joy, and Happiness sincere.

The concluding lines of Winter, taken from the 2nd Edit. 1726,—those words printed in italic show how much has been altered by the author.

END OF VOL. I.

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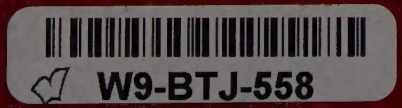
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